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ABSTRACT

This theme issue on transitions for individuals with disabilities contains nine papers discussing transition programs and issues. "Transition Issues for the 1990s," by Michael J. Ward and William D. Halloran, discusses self-determination, school responsibility for transition, continued educational engagement of at-risk students, and service coordination. "Systems Change and Transition Services for Secondary Youth with Disabilities" (Lawrence C. Gloeckler) points out the need for understanding the public policy context of changes in the education system and the interagency service structure. "Putting Youth with Disabilities to Work: A Business-Education Partnership" (Richard M. Balser and others) describes a cooperative program of a medical center and two school districts in Maine. "City Lights School: Fostering Transition for Emotionally Disturbed and Delinquent Adolescents" (Gila R. Shusterman and others) describes a Washington, D.C., school which offers individualized, nonresidential services to disadvantaged, inner city African Americans. "Community Life Options for Persons with Developmental Disabilities" (Jeffrey A. Gliner and Pat Sample) offers three case studies from a supported recreation intervention program. "H.E.L.P. Career Opportunities" (Victoria Amey-Flippin and Rita Brusca) describes the Handicap Educational Liaison Program at Northeastern Illinois University which facilitates career placement opportunities of college students. "Power: A Transition Model for Facilitating Student Choice" (Kay Holjes and Melanie Mattingly) discusses a holistic program of work, education, and recreation for North Carolina students with mental retardation. "Building on Today for Tomorrow: Making a Difference with Families" (Kathryn Moery) describes a Chicago, Illinois project in which families of students with disabilities work closely with school staff to make the transition from high school to adult independent living. "Computer Technologies Program: A Partnership in Progress" (Joan Breves) describes a program begun by IBM to prepare students with disabilities as competitive and well-qualified programmers. (JDD)

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OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

# OSERS

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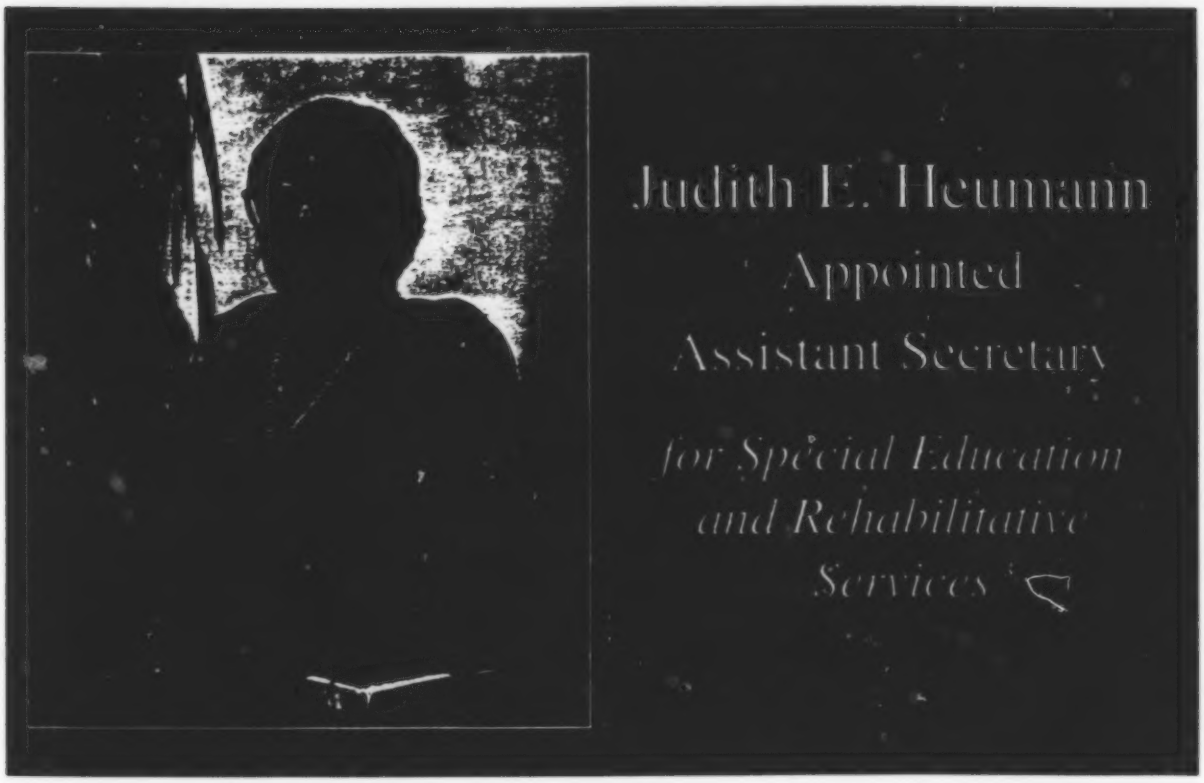


The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education is pleased to welcome Judith E. Heumann as Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

In announcing Ms. Heumann's appointment, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said, "Ms. Heumann has been a highly effective spokesperson and advocate for individuals with disabilities and will be a real asset to the Department. Through her knowledge, leadership, and tenacity she has helped change both laws and perceptions about persons with disabilities, and as a result, has improved the lives of millions of Americans. I welcome her to our team."

In her new position, Heumann will be responsible for a budget of more than $5.25 billion and a staff of 411. She will direct programs that serve nearly six million children, youth, and adults with disabilities. She will oversee OSERS' principal offices: the Office of Special Education Programs, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

For the past 10 years Ms. Heumann has served as Vice President of the World Institute on Disability (WID) in Oakland, California, which she co-founded in 1983. WID was the first public policy, research, and training organization to focus primarily on issues affecting people with disabilities.

From 1975–82, Ms. Heumann was deputy director of the world's first independent living center located in Berkeley, California. In that capacity she helped draft state and federal legislation, resulting in the creation of more than 200 independent living centers nationwide. Previously, Ms. Heumann was a legislative assistant to Senator Harrison Williams, D-N.J., who chaired the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee. In that capacity she helped developed legislation that became the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94–142) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Heumann, who contracted polio at age 18 months, became involved in disability issues after graduating from Long Island University in 1969 when she applied for a teaching position in the New York City school system. She was denied a job because of her disability and subsequently sued the board of education to become the first wheelchair user to teach in the New York City public schools. Ms. Heumann received a master's degree in public health administration in 1975 from the University of California at Berkeley. She is married to Jorge Pineda, a certified public accountant.

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*Volume VI, Number 1*
*Fall 1993*

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United States Department of Education

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*Assistant Secretary*
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

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*Desert Beauty* by
**Winston Sturgen, 1990**
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*Cover art*

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# Transition Issues for the 1990s

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Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
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## Historical Perspective

The 1970s was a decade of focus on special education and rehabilitation issues characterized by concerns with equal access for all students with disabilities, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, individualized educational planning, and due process and procedural safeguards for special education students and their parents. Follow-up studies conducted in the early 1980s revealed that despite the emphasis on equality, integration, and independence as intended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (formerly the Education of the Handicapped Act) and other legislation, significant numbers of special education students leaving public education were entering segregated, dependent, non-productive lives. These findings, along with concern on the part of parents, professionals, and policymakers, gave rise to the focus on transition during the latter part of the 1980s and included emphasis on initial job placement made by the school, work experience prior to exiting school, family networking for transition planning, job referral, and follow-up/follow-along responsibilities.

These issues expanded the role and responsibility of public education to older students with disabilities. They also emphasized the importance of developing relationships between the school and elements of the community, such as families, employers, adult service agencies, and social services. While the 1970s stressed accountability through increased documentation and litigation, the emphasis in the 1980s shifted toward assessing real life outcomes associated with special education. Education agencies began to identify adult adjustment goals for their students in the areas of postsecondary education, employment, and independent living, to plan educational programs and work experiences to achieve those goals, and to follow up on graduates and school leavers in an effort to gauge the effectiveness of school programming. Transition issues in the 1990s, like those of the 1980s, reflect an extension or elaboration of those of the previous decade.

## Emerging Issues

There are several emerging transition issues in this decade: self-determination, the school's responsibility for initial placements, continued educational engagement of at-risk students, and service coordination necessary for the meaningful implementation of the transition requirements contained in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Responding to these issues will require leadership on federal, state, and local levels.

## Self Determination: Education's Ultimate Goal

Issues of decision-making, consumer choice, and self-advocacy are emerging in rehabilitation and education literature as necessary attributes for the successful community participation of people with disabilities. The ultimate goal of education must be to increase the responsibility of all students for managing their own affairs. Actualizing this goal would require a major change in

our approach to educating, parenting, and planning for youth with disabilities.

The amendments to the regulations implementing Part B Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that all students, beginning no later than age 16—and at a younger age, if determined appropriate—be invited to attend any meeting if a purpose of the meeting is the consideration of transition services for the student. IDEA further requires that transition services be based on the student's individual needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. Interventions and strategies to help students increase their participation in the transition planning process must be developed.

## The School's Responsibility for Completing the Initial Transition

Transitions should be perceived as a "right of passage" for all youth with disabilities leaving public or private school programs. Since IDEA requires school districts to ensure that needed transition services are provided to students with disabilities beginning at age 16, and annually thereafter, or at a younger age, if appropriate, special education programs must take an active role in securing the supports and services needed by individuals with disabilities to live and work in their communities. In fact, IDEA recognizes that educational agencies may be coordinated with agencies other than educational agencies in providing or paying needed transition services. This shift in focus will change the role of education from soliciting transition services needed by individual students from other agencies to the schools making initial placements in appropriate community settings with sufficient time for "follow-along" before students exit their educational programs.

Currently, states are striving to provide improved transitional services to students with disabilities. Thus, state agencies and local service agencies need information and assistance in accessing the range of available successful practices, curricula, and products. Through information dissemination and financial support for model program development and adoption, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) can continue to assist school districts in providing improved transition services.

## Continued Educational Engagement of Youth with Disabilities Who Have Dropped Out or Are At-Risk of Dropping Out of School

Dropout rates for youth with disabilities are considerably greater than for the nondisabled population (Wagner, 1991). States reported to OSERS' Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) that during the 1989–90 school year approximately 27 percent of youth who exited special education were dropouts (OSEP, 1992). Ninety percent of these dropouts were 16 or 17 years of age. Other studies by state and local education agencies indicate that the dropout rate is between 31 percent and 35 percent, with even higher rates in urban areas. Still other studies have shown that low socioeconomic status is also related to high dropout rates. Youth in special education drop out of school at a higher rate than their nondisabled peers. Since increasing the graduation rate of all students continues to be a National Goal for Education, we will continue our efforts to engage or to re-engage graduates or dropouts in responsive programs until successful transitions are completed.

## Policy Research: Moving Toward a Seamless Service Delivery System

Despite the passage and initial progress related to the implementation of IDEA, much remains to be done to improve the post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities. Transition services are defined in IDEA as a coordinated set of activities designed within an outcome oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities including: postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Since these activities must be "coordinated," this implies that all providers of adult services now have an enticement to sit down together when developing the transition services component of a student's IEP.

Presently, little is known about the extent to which many state and local agencies are involved in the transition process and the extent to which their policies, procedures, and practices facilitate or impede the provision of a coordinated set of activities. Efforts need to be focused on identifying barriers to effective implementation, developing models of coordination for comprehensive service delivery, and evaluating the impact of improved coordination on student outcomes.

## Conclusion

All of the programs described in the following articles are addressing one or more of these issues. However, as we move through this decade, leadership and cooperative efforts must continue if we are to provide innovative means for meeting post-school outcomes and for resolving emerging issues in transition for students with disabilities.

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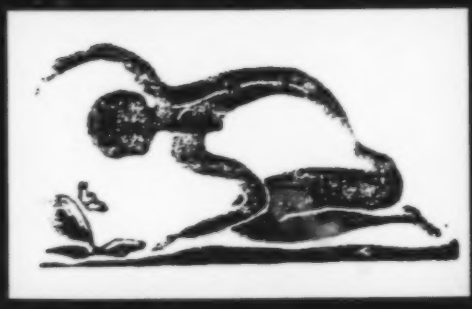

# Systems Change and Transition Services

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## Introduction

The systems change for transition planning and services must address transition as one facet of a comprehensive new service system. Not only must special education services be changed, changes must be made throughout the education system at all levels, including far reaching changes in the interagency service structure. In this larger system, there are compelling forces that constrain or may be used to leverage the desired transition change. Understanding the Public Policy context is pre-requisite to defining and aligning appropriate transition implementation strategies with the forces that will support their success.

Without understanding the Public Policy context now shaping all government services, including programs for youth and adults with disabilities, efforts to implement transition planning and services for youth with disabilities will be ineffectual. Far too often administrators, professionals, and consumers take too narrow a perspective, treating a specific change as if it occurs in a vacuum. Transition assumes, for example, that schools are able to access services and resources of other agencies in the community. The model presumes the community service system is receptive to the schools calling upon their overburdened staff and funding resources. In fact, a serious examination of the community service system, such as undertaken in New York State two years ago, reveals a fragmentary system, laden with communication breakdowns and duplicative service streams with serious gaps.

Because of fiscal constraints, the interagency practice is to get another system to pay first for the services. As a result, young adults who are potentially eligible for services both from schools and from adult service agencies have typically been referred in circles from one system to the other over a period of months, without ever getting to receive actual services. Without a systems strategy that attends to such underlying assumptions of transition planning and services, individual school districts and the students they represent are not likely, alone, to be able to access the external service system as required to implement transition.

## A Unique Time in History

This is a unique period in our history. For the first time, the principles of education and the larger public policy system are lining up with a national agenda for change. In this era, fundamental premises are being scrutinized and reconfigured to form a new framework of public policy. Consistent themes are emerging: emphasis on results not process, consumer-driven decision-making, integration, inter-system resource sharing, and increasing administrative flexibility along with accountability. They are government-wide and interrelated.

One cannot, for example, fully implement the vision of transition as prescribed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) without an understanding of the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992. The transition definition contained in IDEA stresses an outcome-oriented process, full integration of the individual, coordination across interagency systems, and a consumer-driven planning process. For the first time in history, the Rehabilitation Act contains this same definition. Why would this occur? The Findings of the Rehabilitation Act Reauthorization stress uncharacteristic similarity between the underlying intent of the vocational rehabilitation services authorized by the Act and the educational services to individuals with disabilities authorized by IDEA.

# For Secondary Youth with Disabilities

**Findings**—Congress finds that . . .

(3) Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to—

(A) Live independently;
(B) Enjoy self-determination;
(C) Make choices;
(D) Contribute to society;
(E) Pursue meaningful careers;
(F) Enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society;

*(Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992; Section 2. Findings; Purpose; Policy.)*

This statement represents an historical commitment for public policy to assist individuals to achieve a vision of independent functioning in adult roles of living and working, and becoming fully integrated in the community. Having made that commitment in writing means that the commitment is overt, one that can be measured and scrutinized. It assures that transition will not occur in a vacuum. It assures that educational services to individuals with disabilities, where transition planning and services start, are now aligned with vocational rehabilitation services, where, for many, transition planning and services will help bring about the desired outcome.

## The Way It Used To Be

There was a time when educators and, particularly, special educators were exempt from true public scrutiny. Nobody knew what special educators did, or at least didn't really understand it. Few cared. Money was relatively readily available. With the passage of Public Law 94–142, the first intruders, if you will, into the secret realm of special educators were parents, and then came lawyers. But even then, our programs were still fairly insular. Many within the community at large were thankful that we were taking the students off their hands, or, helping "those poor helpless" children.

## How Things Have Changed

There has been an information explosion. The era of omnipresent media has had a profound effect on the public policy arena of education. Education is now, truly, one of the top three National Public Policy issues. Not too many years ago articles debated the federal government's role in education. Now we've had the " Education President." New players have gotten involved: policy shapers of a more generic nature; business leaders; budget planners who must make tough fiscal decisions; newspaper columnists; plus virtually every public policy institute, foundation and political think tank. The days of our insulation from the larger realities are gone for education in general, let alone for special education.

These powerful individuals are asking the kinds of questions that come from an uninvested, nonterritorial viewpoint:

- Why does all this cost so much?
- What results are we getting for our investment?
- What happens to these kids when they grow up?
- How come the outcomes we'd expect aren't there?

Transition planning and services gain in importance in this new public policy context, because transition provides the bridge from educational services to adult outcomes. Transition's emphasis on preparation for successful adult outcomes in further education, employment, and independent living enables educators and advocates to respond to the questions in specific ways. In fact, transition represents a model for regular education to follow.

## The Larger Realities

The forces that are pressing for change to occur in education and in all other areas of public policy are pervasive, for example:

- The need to compete in a global economy;
- The pressure of the federal deficit and tax concerns of business and the middle class;
- The depressed revenue streams available to government to operate all programs and services, one category being educational programs;
- Broad and profound changes in the philosophical and societal context of serving people who have disabilities;

- Dramatically changing expectations expressed by the public at large, by parents, and by consumers in particular; and
- The Total Quality Management movement that is sweeping our country with its focus on the customer and on continuous improvement.

## Public Policy and Education

These forces are having a major effect on the public policy discussion in education, special education, and specifically transition. Transition systems planners need to consider the direction being shaped by the following major public policy themes of the 1990s:

- Integration;
- Interagency collaboration;
- Consumer Involvement/Focus;
- More Flexibility/Accountability;
- New standards for success;
- Transition; and
- Community based services.

These are intertwined. The overarching theme is integration—this translates into the fundamental philosophical commitment that with supports, every individual is capable of participating in community living, learning, and working roles. Flexibility of approaches will take us away from arbitrarily assigning individuals into categorical programs, stimulating the creation of unique options based on individual needs. We will have to be accountable to new standards of success. The standard will no longer be that students complete school, but how each individual is equiped to live his or her life in relation to the larger community, productively and independently. Transition will be a means to achieve integration, not an end in itself.

## Related Public Policies

To understand and study public policy as it emerges, one needs to be familiar with key public policy documents. Three examples are explored in this article:

(1) *Reinventing Government*, by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler;
(2) The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992;
(3) The New York State *Compact for Learning*, as an example of education reform.

## Reinventing Government Through Total Quality Management

When Osborne and Gaebler (1992) use the term "government" they use it broadly—federal, state, and local entities, including schools as well as sanitation departments, indeed all functions of government. They studied individual government initiatives across the country that are embracing the Quality Management Initiative and by virtue of that reinventing how they do business. The common themes they discovered throughout these initiatives include new approaches being taken by government to:

- Empower citizens rather than take care of them;
- Reward success in government rather than failure;
- Emphasize prevention rather than cure;
- Reduce rules and unnecessary procedures to the most streamlined that are effective.

Quality principles are having a profound effect on the global economy and they will on government. Principles of Total Quality Management are penetrating the public policy sector, just as it is reshaping business. Businesses are perceptibly getting more customer friendly. They will listen, explain things to you, answer your questions—or they don't survive. The public is increasingly seen as the consumer of government services—the customer, if you will—and government's job is to please the customer, to give the customer a quality product. Schools are being challenged in the same way. They must listen to their customers or become irrelevant. Just as businesses will have to seek to continuously improve their product or services, so will schools and related public service systems —

- Under IDEA and under educational reform, school personnel will have to listen to the parent and the student.
- Under the Rehabilitation Act, the rehabilitation system will have to listen and respond to the consumer.

## The Rehabilitation Act

The Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act was signed into law October 29, 1992. This act is one of the most profound pieces of public policy of the last several decades. It is particularly important for educators because it holds the key to understanding how programs will be evaluated in the future. It clearly lays out the standards by which we will be judged. And it also brings a rare alignment to National Public Policy in the area of disability. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act are now very much synchronized regarding philosophy, policy direction, and expectation.

**Findings**—Congress finds that . . . the goals of the nation properly include the goal of providing individuals with disabilities with the tools necessary to make informed choices and decisions; and achieve equality of opportunity, full inclusion and integration in society, employment, independent living, and economic and social self-sufficiency, for such individuals.

**Policy**—It is the policy of the United States that all programs, projects, and activities receiving assistance under this act sl all be carried out in a manner consistent with the principles of:

(1) Respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of meaningful careers, based on informed choice, of individuals with disabilities;

(2) Respect for the privacy, rights, and equal access (including the use of accessible formats), of the individuals;

(3) Inclusion, integration, and full participation of the individuals;

(4) Support for the involvement of a parent, a family member, a guardian, an advocate, or an authorized representative if an individual with a disability requests, desires, or needs such support; and

(5) Support for individual and systemic advocacy and community involvement.

*Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992: Section 2. Findings; Purposes; Policy.*

These words are extremely powerful, speaking clearly to directions touched on earlier, particularly integration, interagency collaboration, consumer involvement and focus, standards for success, community based services and support for families. These are the basic tenets for transition.

## Educational Reform

The larger realities are forcing educational reform across the country. In New York State, the Board of Regents *New Compact for Learning* is the public policy blueprint for improving elementary, middle, and secondary education results in the 1990s. The *Compact* calls for a new way of doing business in educational programs in the following ways:

> We must reconceive the system itself. To begin with, we must understand that schools alone cannot bring about the improved education results we need. Schools are central to the effort, of course, and school personnel should be held accountable for their world. But increasingly we realize that if children are to learn and develop well, parents must take more responsibility for the education of their children (and must be given the opportunity to do so); higher education, community educational and cultural institutions, the social services and health communities, and the business community must play an active part; and students themselves must in some cases accept more responsibility for their own educational progress. *(Page 2)*

These precepts of comprehensive change, accountability, collaboration with outside systems, partnership with parents and students and with the world of business are very consistent with the whole idea of reinventing government and the powerful themes of the Rehabilitation Act. The principles of the *Compact* are an indicator of public policy in the movement for complete educational reform that is sweeping every state. They also parallel transition:

- **All children can learn**—a belief that all children are capable of learning and contributing to society;
- **Focus on results**—our mission is not to keep school; it is to see that children learn. The energies of all participants should be focused on achieving the desired outcomes. Accountability does not end with following established rules and procedures; its essence is found in results.
- **Aim for Mastery**—All children are entitled to a curriculum, to instructional methods, and to adult expectations which challenge them to perform at their best, and help them become truly proficient in knowledge and skill.
- **Authority with Accountability**—Each participant in the educational system should have the authority needed to discharge effectively his or her responsibility, and each participant should be held accountable for achieving the desired results.
- **Reward Success and Remedy Failure**—Achievement of desired results by individuals and groups should be rewarded. The existing system tends to reward those who make no waves. The times, demand a system which rewards those who take risks to produce results. Occasional failure in a large and diverse system is probably unavoidable. However, failure should not be permitted to persist. When it occurs, with either individuals or groups, help should be provided and the situation changed. (*Compact*, page 3)

## Aligning Transition With Public Policy Directions

As reflected in educational reform, the Rehabilitation Act, and the principles of quality management, public policy is clearly being driven by consistent themes that are related to service programs for people who have disabilities. These themes point to the directions that must be taken in aligning transition with the new system.

- **Integration** is now a constant theme throughout all the federal acts. The Rehabilitation Act calls for placement of persons in integrated job settings and focuses on work within business and industry. Debates are heating up at the K–12 level on this issue, around the subject of inclusion, and at the 0–2 level we are clearly moving to a fully integrated, community based family centered system.
- **Interagency** efforts will become the standard way of doing things in the near future, not the unusual case. Systems cannot meet the demands of this increasingly complex activity on their own. Duplication and overlap have to go and collaboration (i.e, working together as compared to talking to each other) will become our way of doing business. Services will increasingly be co-located.
- **Consumer Involvement**—consumer focus will become an absolute basic tenet, much like parent involvement in the 1980s. Consumer choice will be a standard posture in rehabilitation and a growing issue in education.
- **Flexibility** will be offered more readily, reducing confrontations

between states and localities and federal program administration, but there will be much greater demand for accountability for results at all levels of our human service systems.

- **Outcomes**—Success won't be judged by a child completing school, if that person then doesn't go on to a successful post-secondary experience or obtain a meaningful job. That won't be someone else's problem, it will be a problem for all of us.
- **Emphasis on transition** will continue to increase. Families will want to know that their son or daughter is ready to move on and that it won't be like falling off a cliff. More providers of adult services will have to interact with schools on a collaborative interagency basis routinely. These partnerships will have to become real. The systems will have to come together in a seamless fashion.
- **Community-based services** will be available—services for families, for children, where people work. They will be routinely expected to be community based, not institutional.

## Transition in the Interagency Context

To build New York's new system, a series of interagency negotiations is underway to create the climate that will foster these themes commonly across all programs and services, not limited to transition purposes but in the larger context, creating lifelong access to all services if needed, as needed, and where needed. This approach is contributing to key agreements being forged to enable systems to collaborate in "win-win" situations addressing longstanding problems for all systems and benefitting transition in the long run.

The subject of transition focuses primarily on children. But look at public policy through a bigger vision, not the segmented approach we would have taken previously. If we know that the needs of children with emotional disabilities transcend the school day, for example, then it behooves us to look at their needs in a much broader sense than just the school, or just the day treatment program, or just the vocational rehabilitation program.

The New York State Education Department and the New York State Office of Mental Health recently signed an historical and comprehensive Interagency Memorandum of Agreement (1992). From the perspective of the *Compact*, " . . . if children are to learn and develop to their potential the entire community must be engaged in a partnership with the school." *(p. 1, MOA)* From the perspective of the mental health system, "there is broad based acknowledgement that children are best served when they can remain with their families or in a family-like setting in the community and mental health services are integrated with the services from other child-serving systems." *(p. 2)*

### Key provisions of the SED–OMH Memorandum of Agreement that relate to transition:

This interagency agreement describes the mutual commitment of the NYS Education Department (SED) and the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) to jointly develop a complementary system of education, vocational rehabilitation, independent living and mental health services. Specific commitments to school districts by OMH include the provision of:

- cross agency training;
- consultation or technical assistance;
- mental health assessment and referral; and help with service linkages.

Possible activities include development of mental health treatment and support services within the student's natural environment (e.g., classrooms and work sites) to eliminate duplication of services and the provision of assistance in maintaining children in their homes and community-based school programs.

This agreement was signed in November 1992, and distributed simultaneously to schools and to County Mental Health Directors. School districts and County Mental Health Directors are being encouraged to discuss current and needed mental health treatment and support services as may be required locally for students. Transition students will benefit as will younger students, families, and youth who move on to adult life.

This is a perfect example of the way public policy development in government is moving. Five years ago we would have had an agreement between education and day treatment and each agency would have carried out such initiatives independently. This agreement looks at the whole system, lifelong, 24 hours a day in a comprehensive and collaborative context.

In addition to this joint written plan for collaboration regarding transition, family preservation and lifelong learning, a similar agreement has been written between the NYS Education Department and the NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities:

### Key provisions of the SED–OMRDD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that relate to transition:

This interagency agreement describes the mutual commitment of the New York State Education Department (SED) and the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) to carry out joint initiatives to assist families with young children to access appropriate services, enhance integration of services within schools, and broaden vocational as well as lifelong learning opportunities. Specific commitments include the provision of:

- technical assistance for students, families, and school personnel;

- collaboration in providing assistive technology;
- enhanced integration of medicaid services in school services;
- expanded employment and independent living options;
- support for family preservation through social and education supports to help children stay at home or in their home communities;
- streamlined access to lifelong support services.

This agreement was signed in February 1992. OMRDD's regional offices are working actively with schools and SED to identify and pilot local collaborative projects. Local agreements are being drafted based on the statewide MOU, drawing schools, other educational agencies, and community service providers together in specific ways.

## The Vision of Transition From the Student's Perspective

Visualize what the student's experience of the process of transition planning and services ideally could be. In the new system, transition planning and services will have the power to consistently foster the student's growth and development of comprehensive skills in preparation for successful living, learning, and working.

Goals and objectives will be defined by the student's own needs, preferences, and interests. The student's active participation will go beyond being invited to the meeting. The student will be enabled to visualize future roles, to communicate that vision, to assess his or her own strengths and needs both for the development of skills and the acquisition of supports in relation to the vision, to direct his or her own efforts in pursuit of that vision, and to negotiate effectively with others who control access to the services needed to accomplish the vision. The list of tasks involved—anticipate, define, communicate, assess, plan, negotiate, advocate—will call on skills acquired through the educational experience.

If we proceeded in traditional ways, we would allow the individual and his or her family to carry the burden of these tasks in isolation. This approach has been a classic technique for helping individuals to fail to become independent and self-directing. Immense frustrations are inherent in battling for information about options, in struggling to clarify goals in absence of reality-testing experiences, and in working in the absence of a climate that welcomes student and family participation. In the traditional system, many families and students have given up trying to work with the schools after primary education grades. Other families have developed a more adversarial relationship with the schools, and the secondary education planning process has become one in which neither side has felt free to be open and flexible.

In our new system, the consumer will have free access to information about options and will be provided through the educational process with assistance to clarify interests and goals. He or she will have natural opportunities through applied experiences on college campuses, on jobs, and in the community to develop self-awareness in the context of life's reality factors. This person will be able to progressively grow in decision-making and self-advocacy skills. The individual will be able to express his or her needs and be acknowledged respectfully as the customer.

Professional personnel representing the system will be responsive to individual needs. If problems arise with the system, then the system, not the individual, will take responsibility for problem resolution in a satisfying and timely way. Options will be available or can flexibly be created to serve a broad variety of customer requests. In the new system, the consumer will perceive that the services received are logical and coordinated. The services will flow so seamlessly that the consumer does not distinguish that a different system is supplying the underlying revenue for the services.

## An Example

An example of such an occurrence can be anticipated at the point where a student, having experienced comprehensive independent living and vocational preparation while in school, nevertheless requires continuing rehabilitation services at the conclusion of secondary education.

In the past, the lack of coordination between the education and rehabilitation services systems would have led the individual to the case manager or counselor *after* school completion. Despite the extensive assessments carried out by the school for special education or guidance purposes, the lack of appropriately informative records being made available to the adult agency from the school would require the young adult to be referred for extensive, additional assessments. The person and their family would react at the illogic, wondering why, if they've already gone through this for the school, more tests are needed. The person would experience weeks of delay in continuing with services while awaiting the testing reports. Very likely, the goal the student may have prepared for would be discounted by the counselor as being inappropriate to the person's skills or in light of the jobs really available in the labor market.

In the new system, the school's anticipation of the need for access to rehabilitation services will result in service providers working along with the student, the family, and the school during the last two years of secondary education before the student's exit. The cumulative records kept by the school about the student's academic, vocational, and independent living skills and experiences will supply the needs of the rehabilitation process for a functional understanding of the student's needs, abilities, interests, and goals. The mutual planning process will be so coordinated that the rehabilitation process can eliminate the need for further assessments. The goals will be appropriately established. Services will be provided

when needed, not when the systems are finally finished "processing the person." Services can continue in a natural, uninterrupted progression toward these goals, building on and completing the preparation the student has started while in school. The student will participate productively and effectively in adult living, learning, and working roles on a lifelong basis. *(See Joint Agreement to Improve Transition, VESID–EMS)*

## Conclusions

The changes that need to be made are fundamental, not cosmetic. Systems change agents responsible for transition need to recognize and work along with these forces for public policy change. As a result of this strategy, transition principles will become embedded naturally into the new ways of doing business in government that will serve our children into the next century. The broad-based approach to systems change will enable us to resolve critical resource problems through collaborative delivery of services with other systems. It will most of all enable us to answer the hard questions of outcomes.

## Next Steps—Resolving the Public Policy Dilemma Gaps

The inevitable struggles are underway to maintain the status quo versus radically changing the system. *There is always a gap between the emergence of new public perceptions, expectations, and philosophy and the existence of new public policy.* That's why we have public policy research institutes and systems change grants. *There is then always another gap between the establishment of new public policy and local implementation of that policy as change radiates throughout the system.*

These sequential gaps cause huge tension from outside and within systems. There is a great deal of strong reaction from both extremes—digging in to resist change, or an urgency to rush. In virtually every system, there are people who are unable to accept such historic changes—what is called, "paradigm paralysis."

Each person's reaction to these profound changes probably depends on when the person entered the profession. Some readers are probably saying—"Of course!" Others may be awed by the profound change. For those thinking that some of the things discussed are impossible or terrible—your successors in the future will be saying, "Of course." Because somehow, in the end, things do change. The innovators, the fresh thinkers, the entrepreneurs come forward and lead the way.

Who would have thought twenty years ago that so much change would become integrated in our way of life—that institutions for the mentally retarded would actually close? That we no longer would be debating the benefits of mainstreaming but instead full inclusion? That the Rehabilitation Act would have such a powerful new purpose, calling for the full integration of people with disabilities into the community work force? That national early intervention legislation would be in place and be based on supporting the family as well as the child?

In sharing this analysis of the major relevant public policy that surrounds transition today, it is hoped that you will think about your own values as compared to those being embraced. It is essential that the leaders of education systems change approach their task with a fundamental understanding of the environment, and that this environment be viewed much more broadly than it has traditionally been. Our customers' expectations have changed and will keep changing. We must know that, understand it, and be prepared to keep the pace.

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*The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended in 1992,* 29 U.S. Code Sections 720 *et. seq.*

# Putting Youth with Disabilities to Work: A Business–Education Partnership

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"We feel strongly that our buddy system, our capacity and commitment to promote from within, and the culture of this firm . . . should be utilized in other companies. One of the benefits that resulted . . . is the coworkers who have taken time to lend a hand; whether it be setting up a worksite or taking some of their own time to give a ride to the company field day, Christmas party, or even home when no other way is available." This busi-



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nessman-convert represents one of the unintended consequences of the business-education component of a three-year demonstration project, "Putting Youth with Disabilities to Work." When schools and businesses interact in new ways, traditional roles change. The business person can become not only a teacher in the classroom but also an ambassador in the community. This man was instrumental in recruiting other businesses to participate in some of the many roles defined for business.

One of the unique aspects of the business-education partnership, supported by a grant from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, is that the demonstration was run neither by a school nor by a for-profit business but rather by a hospital. The Hospital Industries Program in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at the Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine, served as an effective bridge between the employment community and the two participating public school systems, Westbrook and South Portland, Maine. With experience as an employer, a rehabilitation facility and the manager of job training and education programs, the Hospital Industries Program could actively address any fears or trepidations of employers. At the same time it brought expertise to the analysis of disabilities and the provision of tangible supports to make job placement realistic for students.

The project's goal was to increase the number of severely disabled youth by 50 who would obtain and maintain jobs with the necessary supports upon graduation. It was designed to achieve the goal by helping students with disabilities to explore career options while still in school; by demonstrating the student's capacity for employment by providing a number of job experiences, each building upon the other; by collecting evaluative material on the student's tolerance for work, stamina, and ability to get along on the job; by documenting the relationship of the specific disability and the necessary support to job performance; and, by building a work record through paid employment.

## Assumptions About Youth With Disabilities

A major hypothesis underlying the project's design was that youth with disabilities did not have job experiences commensurate with their counterparts without disabilities and that paid employment during school was inextricably linked to employment upon graduation. Job experiences raise aspirations among both youth and their families about their capability and capacity to work. Job experiences help students learn what they like and are suited to do. Job experiences build confidence in employers who are considering the youth for full-time employment. A second hypothesis was that schools, municipalities, and other employers through local Chambers of Commerce would work cooperatively toward common employment goals in the interest of each. Both proved to be true.

## Approach

To achieve the goal, project staff took a three-pronged approach: they facilitated modification of the school curriculum; they initiated activities to bring schools and businesses together; and they involved the community in new ways.

**Curriculum Development**—modifications were made to the school curriculum including the introduction of a career development program to teach the skills necessary to find and keep a meaningful job and a social skills program, SUCCESS, to teach the critical skills of accepting criticism and asking for help in the job.

**Business/Education Partnership**—a series of activities were undertaken which brought employers into the classroom and students into the worksite including community-based employment assessments of the youth's readiness to work; job shadowing activities; and paid employment in integrated work settings, largely during the summer.

**Community Integration**—A series of activities were undertaken designed to involve provider agencies, parents, and employers in the transition process. These included establishing working agreements with agencies; setting up parent forums; establishing a Business Advisory Committee for the project; and serving as a liaison to the legislatively appointed Committee on Transition.

### Participants

All youth who were characterized as "special education" students in either participating school system were eligible to participate. In the end, there were 141 participants over the three years. We defined a participant as any youth who received any of the project interventions. Regarding type of disability, the largest percent (40 percent) had learning disabilities while the next largest were behaviorally impaired. Only one child had head trauma, visual impairment, and physical handicaps.

### Evaluation Procedures

The evaluation plan focused both on the processes (curriculum, tours, job shadowing) and on the outcomes (employment status). Evaluators reviewed the numbers and kinds of activities the students took part in, the teachers' assessment of each component, and the outcomes for participants.

Evaluators defined four outcomes for those who graduated from high school during the course of the project and also participated in one or more activities: presently employed; employed after graduation but not at present; participation in further education; and participation in the military. One problem in conducting the outcome evaluation was that only 40 of the 141 participants graduated during the course of the project, providing a very small number from which to derive any quantitative conclusions. In addition, 6 participants, or 4 percent, dropped out although one of these is employed.

Data collected on students were placed in the student record and reviewed during the IEP process. In the third year, telephone contacts were made with students from all three years to ascertain their employment and educational status. A manual tracking system was established to record each student participant, the activities in which they participated, the job experiences they had, and the final outcome after graduation.

In addition, a control group was identified of special education students who attended school at the same time as project participants but who did not receive any project interventions. The control group was examined after graduation for employment outcomes so that evaluators could determine whether there was a difference between participants and non-participants.

## Results

**Student Participation**—A total of 141 students participated in the project, half from each school system. Participation was defined as taking part in one or more of the following activities: **SUCCESS**—a social skills program that focuses on asking for help and accepting criticism on the job. The program was utilized for all special education students, primarily in their English classes. Each teacher individualized the program to meet the needs of his or her students. **Paid employment**—includes all phases of employment including employment during the school year, summer employment, competitive employment, and supported employment. **Assessment**—entails a written report that examines a student's work attitudes, behaviors and/or skills in an actual work setting. Reports outline work attempted, strengths and weaknesses, recommendations for future experiences, and possible remedial work that could be pursued at home or at school. **Job shadowing and/or training**—includes: (a) unpaid work experiences in the community lasting from one-half day to one month. These could include hands-on work or observing someone else doing the job; (b) group work, defined as unpaid work in which an entire class participates together. This usually involved students trying out a job for two hours a week for a month; and, (c) tours and informational interviews. **Career exploration**—includes both classroom activities utilizing **A Guide to Career Exploration** curriculum and assistance to individuals in the form of career counseling.

The largest percent of youth, 37 percent, participated in only one activity. The second largest participated in two and the third largest in three. The average number of interventions for all participants was three.

Special education staff provided a numerical ranking to each component's effectiveness. In South Portland, the top three components, in that order, were career counseling, paid employment, and unpaid employment. The least useful component was SUCCESS followed by classroom speakers when those speakers were not incorporated into other career exploration activities. In Westbrook, the top three components were paid employment, unpaid employment, and tours of worksites. The least useful component was classroom speakers, with the same caveat as above, followed by SUCCESS. Thus, there was consensus in both schools that paid and unpaid employment were two of the top three components and SUCCESS and classroom speakers with no academic lesson tied in were the least useful. If we combine the scores from both schools, we find that the top ranked component was paid employment.

Through structured interviews with the teachers, we learned about the impact of the project on them, the school, and their ability to prepare students for jobs. The greatest change was one of attitude: the attitude of the teachers, the students, and the parents toward the employability of these youth. "The older kids talk about work experience and job shadowing. The freshmen hear about it and want to partake." As such, aspirations have been raised and expectations heightened. "Some of my students with mental handicaps now see work as an option from being on job sites, taking tours. They engage in a more adult/mature discussion about their futures." "I see a huge change in the parental attitudes," one teacher commented. "Now they do see their children as having potential for doing something."

"We must continue to educate both the educators and business people that these students are employable. We are learning. So are the businesses that the kids are a marketable work force. That's why I liked the tours. The youth saw other people with disabilities working. I realize that we either set the goal or put the lid on it."

"There were a lot less barriers out there than I thought when I actually got to meet the business people and see the businesses themselves. One of the important things I learned from these people was, 'Don't teach them a specific skill; we'll do that; teach them attitudes.'" That underscored the need for curricula like SUCCESS.

Some of the teachers reflected on individual students who were positively affected by the program. "I had one student, labeled "educably mentally retarded," who was passive, naive, and unrealistic. He would never look toward the future. The project turned out to be the impetus for him. He did career exploration and then visited various job sites. He's experienced bits and pieces of everything and is interested in word processing. The counselor from the project met with him once a week, kept re-focusing him and wouldn't let up. He no longer needs a job coach and plans to go to technical school after graduating to hone his skills."

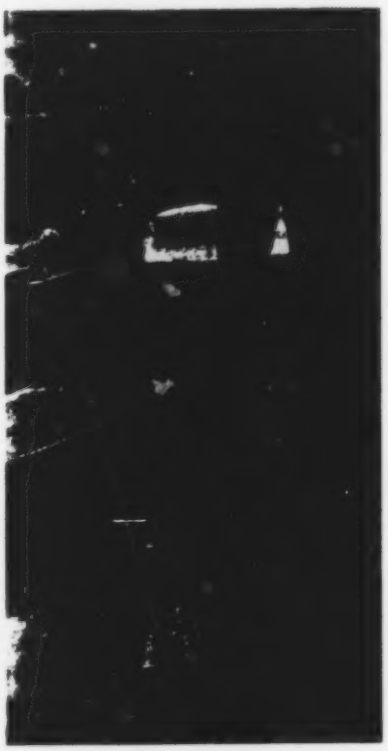
"The kids see this as real life stuff, unlike what we often deliver. It makes them feel as if they are being treated like adults. I had an emotionally disturbed youth who has worked the past two summers through the program. Before the experience, he would not eat in

the cafeteria. He would not even go to the bathroom by himself. Now he attends mainstream classes. Even his mother has renewed aspirations for him. She calls around vacation time to see if I can arrange some work for him."

"I had a young lady with a severe learning disability. She wanted to make something of herself but had no support at home, no motivator. First she benefitted from job shadows. Then she learned how to fit into an office setting, how to file and be a receptionist. This has given her the self esteem and self confidence we couldn't have dreamed of. Staff then encouraged her to speak at a conference about SUCCESS. It was gut wrenching. For her to even experience these things was wonderful. Now she is a volunteer outreach person for foster children. It has all come together for her. She lives on her own in an apartment and pays the bills."—Special Education Teacher.

**Student Outcomes**—In Westbrook, 22 students who had participated in the project graduated during the course of the project, while in South Portland, 18 participants graduated. Of those for whom information is available (28 out of 40), 69 percent of the graduates (11 students) from Westbrook are presently employed while 83 percent of the graduates (10 students) from South Portland are presently employed. Examples of job sites are hotels, banks, paper mills, fast food outlets, building supply companies, hospitals, movers, and print shops.

At the beginning of the project we predicted that the major outcome would be the competitive employment of 50 youth upon graduation. This goal was too ambitious because there were fewer youth in Special Education than originally anticipated and fewer graduated during the course of the project than anticipated (with only 40 graduates, even if every person had achieved employment, the outcome would have been only 40). As it turns out, 62.5 percent, or 25 graduates, had achieved some form of employment since graduation, and 37.5 percent or 15 students either had no employment or information was not available on the students' employment status. Only one graduate is in the military. At the time of the follow-up survey, 21 graduates were currently employed and seven were not. Information could not be obtained on the other 12. That is, 75 percent of graduates for whom information could be obtained were employed.



After examining the outcomes for the graduates, we attempted to determine whether there was any relationship between the numbers and kinds of interventions received through the project and the outcome of employment. We did find one highly significant correlation and this is perhaps the most important finding of the demonstration. *Paid employment was the only intervention singly or in combination that had a statistically significant relationship to employment after graduation.* Because of the very small sample size, it is highly possible that, with greater numbers, other interventions could be found to be significant in combination with paid employment. However, with this size they could not. Of those who had an experience of paid employment while in high school through this program, 89 percent had some employment after graduation while only 11 percent did not. In contrast, of those participants who did not have a paid employment experience, 41 percent were employed. Those who received paid employment were 48 percent more likely to be employed upon graduation than those who did not. These findings are highly significant at the .002 level.

Evaluators examined employment status by disability. Of the 12 graduates with mental retardation, at least 9 individuals or 75 percent have held a job since graduation. Of the 17 individuals with learning disabilities, at least 10 students or 58 percent have had a job since graduation. Of the five graduates with behavior impairments, only one has worked since graduation. Of the four youth with multiple disabilities, all have worked since graduation. Of the two graduates with speech and language impairments, one has been employed since graduation.

We also compared outcomes for special education youth who participated in the project with special education youth who did not. A positive outcome was defined as presently employed, employed since leaving school, or participation in additional educational programming. We found that 87 percent of the youth who had participated in the grant and who had worked in high school had a positive employment outcome. Fifty percent who had participated in the grant but who had not worked in high school did not have a positive outcome. Of those youth who did not participate in the grant but who had paid employment through other means, nearly 95 percent had a positive employment outcome. Thirty-three percent who had not participated in the

grant and did not have employment during high school also did not have employment after high school.

## Conclusions

Using data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study, D'Amico (1991) reports that rates of competitive employment of youth with disabilities leaving secondary school range from 57 percent for youth classified as learning disabled to under 10 percent for youth classified as multiply handicapped. Our small sample yielded similar results for youth labeled "learning disabled" with 59 percent employed and far better results for the 4 youth with multiple disabilities, 100 percent employed. Our data also indicate that students who have multiple disabilities or who are mentally retarded are more likely to find employment than those who are behaviorally impaired, a finding not supported by the National Longitudinal Transition Study. We conjecture that employers can make adjustments to the work environment to accommodate people with physical disabilities and can find suitable tasks for people whose mental capacities are significantly below normal. However, behavioral problems may be viewed as more unpredictable and therefore more difficult to address. People in the business of helping such students prepare for employment must pay further attention to the particular difficulties presented, as much from the employers' perspective as from the youths'.

These data also reaffirm the work of Hasazi et al. that having paid employment in high school (regardless of other activities) is the active ingredient in producing an outcome of employment or continuing education after high school. D'Amico and Marder (September, 1991) report that "recent work has detailed the key components of transition planning, including the formulation of an individualized transition plan for each student, the forging of interagency agreements, and the provision of placement services" (e.g., Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood, and Barcus, 1988; Wehman, Kregel, Barcus, 1985; Hasazi, 1985) (p. 2). It is not clear whether the provision of placement services is the same as finding students jobs. Assuming that it is, our demonstration would concur with these activities with one exception. Little or no mention is made of the role of the employer.

The school-to-work transition project focused considerable energy in recruiting employers and experimenting with myriad ways to involve them, from providing company tours to speaking in the classroom to allowing students to shadow workers and work without pay—all this in addition to paid employment opportunities. We found that one of the greatest barriers to implementing this kind of demonstration project is the traditional lack of school contact with employers and the inability to overcome that deficit. Educators, and especially those in special education, are not attuned to, or experienced in, enlisting the support of the employment community.

On the other side, project staff found a tremendous willingness, interest, and desire on the part of employers to become involved. It was very important to give them options—a business tour may feel less threatening in the beginning than the pledge of a part-time job. However, many employers' commitment escalated as each experience proved to be rewarding. On-the-job supervisors became not only proponents but also beneficiaries of the project. "One of the students was constantly saving his change so that he could donate to charities that were, ironically enough, benefitting less fortunate families. These individuals with whom I worked, whether they know it or not, will forever serve as an inspiration to me as I encounter difficult times of my own."

One of the most significant outcomes of the demonstration is that it did not end when federal funding ceased after three years. Instead, the Maine Department of Education has decided to replicate the project in two rural counties providing the same level of funding as the original project. Due to the economic downturn in the Northeast and the serious financial constraints facing state government, the continued funding is an unusual endorsement of the work that has been achieved through the federal demonstration.

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# *City Lights School:*
# Fostering Transition for Emotionally Disturbed and Delinquent Adolescents

Photo courtesy City Lights School

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Since Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975 (now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), the educational community has been interested in developing appropriate educational programs for all students with disabilities. Particularly challenging has been the task of providing educational opportunities in the least restrictive environments appropriate for students who are seriously emotionally disturbed. In 1982, City Lights School began to meet this challenge with its community based psychoeducational treatment program in Washington, DC.

City Lights was founded under the auspices of the Children's Defense Fund after a class action lawsuit (Bobby D. v. Barry, D.C. Superior Court, July 7, 1980) faulted the District of Columbia for providing insufficient non-institutional care for over 600 children who had been neglected. City Lights serves a population of disadvantaged, inner city, primarily African American adolescents

who are seriously emotionally disturbed. (Bobby D. v. Barry, D.C. Superior Court, July 7, 1980) These youths have typically been truant from school, have had some involvement with the court system, through either neglect or juvenile delinquency, and have not received sufficient clinical and psychological interventions.

City Lights has demonstrated that these students can benefit from a program that is non-residential yet more restrictive and individualized than public education settings. The school offers a comprehensive array of services, including remedial education, case management, psychological counseling, crisis intervention, pre-vocational training, job placement, and substance abuse prevention. Staff members design an individualized treatment plan for each student, one which helps the youth discover and expand his or her interests and talents. A collaborative team comprised of a teacher, a social worker, and a foster grandparent works with each student to instill self-control and social responsibility (Zielenbach, 1992).

In 1983 the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Educational and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) expanded upon the 1975 Act and introduced transition as a priority for students with disabilities (Johnson & Rusch, 1993). Transition has been characterized as the "bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life (Will, 1983, p.2)." It includes the achievement of gainful employment and the capacity to live, socialize, and engage independently in community life (DeStephano & Snauwaert, 1989). Since 1983, OSERS has directed a national effort to provide interventions that facilitate the transition of youths with disabilities. Numerous educational and social programs funded by OSERS grants have been directed toward adolescents' achievement of these transition goals within the constraints of their disabilities.

## *LaTanya*

Seventeen-year-old LaTanya has been a student at City Lights for 2 years. She became a ward of the District of Columbia at age 10 as a result of abuse and neglect by her parents. She has lived in a number of different group homes. LaTanya was referred to City Lights because of fighting and academic failure in the public schools.

The first transition process for LaTanya was her transition into City Lights School, and she has done this successfully. In her previous school, LaTanya was chronically truant. At City Lights, her attendance has been close to 100 percent. For several months now, LaTanya has been working as an assistant in a large office downtown. Though LaTanya's reading remains at approximately a third-grade level, she is developing the skills and confidence to succeed in her job.

LaTanya's attitude and behavior in school have changed markedly. Her initial aggressiveness and tendency to initiate fights has lessened, and she has shown a greater willingness to be confronted about changing her behavior. City Lights has provided her with the consistency and structure that she has lacked throughout her life, and she has responded positively.

LaTanya's next challenge will be her transition out of City Lights School and into the adult world. LaTanya's dream is to become a math teacher, yet her low reading capability may prevent her from reaching the educational level necessary for such a career. City Lights staff members continue to work with her to identify suitable and attainable career goals.

Next year, LaTanya plans to return to a public high school. City Lights staff members will assist her in making this transition. Her case manager will maintain regular contact with her and insure that she has the support she will need when she leaves City Lights. If her transition back to public school is not successful, LaTanya will be welcome to return to City Lights, as many other students have.

The changes in LaTanya's life since she has been enrolled at City Lights have not been dramatic or immediate, yet her life is significantly different now than it was 2 years ago. With the help of City Lights' committed staff, she will continue proceeding toward her transition to adulthood.

Photo courtesy City Lights School

## Transition of Emotionally Disturbed Youth

In 1991, City Lights School received an OSERS grant to study the transition of its own students to integrated post-secondary environments. For these youths, transition is comprised of a considerably different set of challenges from those of other populations with disabilities. First of all, their needs are less concrete and are continually changing. Second, their social environment does not provide the support that is characteristic of successful transitions.

For many adolescents with disabilities, necessary transition services are relatively concrete and specific. For example, a person who is blind must be provided services that allow him or her to learn and function independently without the benefit of sight. While this is extremely challenging, the nature of the disability that must be addressed generally does not change. In contrast, a City Lights student's disability is closely intertwined with his or her environment and life history and changes continually. Such adolescents have been abused and neglected throughout their lives. They are transferred into and out of group homes, foster care placements, and the homes of their own substance abusing parents. Drug activity and gang violence erupt in their neighborhoods; their parents are abusive; poverty and unemployment result in unstable living arrangements and even homelessness. The disability of such an adolescent is a moving target, so the services necessary to address it are less clearly delineated.

One of the frequently documented "best practices" in transition is parental involvement in transition planning and implementation (Kohler, 1993). Most adolescents with physical and mental disabilities have a network of non-disabled people around them who can provide resources and act as role models and advocates. A City Lights student, on the other hand, is rarely the only "problem child" in an otherwise healthy and supportive environment. Frequently, the student's entire family system is disabled and dysfunctional. There are often no role models and few available resources.

Efforts to document the transition of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) have demonstrated that the process is a difficult one. Neel, Meadows, Levine and Edgar (1988)

studied drop-out patterns of adolescents with severe behavior disorders in Washington State. They found that nearly one-third of these adolescents were not receiving the training or support that would be necessary for participation in their adult world. Unemployment among these EBD youth was nearly three times higher (40 percent versus 15 percent) than among the general national population. Newman (1991) described the findings of the National Longitudinal Transition Study of high school students. This research demonstrated that 20 percent of the EBD youth had arrest records while they were still in school; 35 percent had arrest records after they had been out of school for 2 years. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Justice reports that 32 percent of young adult parolees are rearrested within a year after being released from prison, and 47 percent are rearrested within two years. Seventy-six percent of young, African American parolees are rearrested within 6 years of their release from prison. Without excellent intervention services, young African Americans who are emotionally disturbed and have already become involved in the juvenile justice system have few chances for a positive transition to adulthood.

## Transition at City Lights

Though transition to adult life after leaving City Lights is an ultimate goal, the program focuses on the transition that takes place from the moment the student walks in the door. For each student, the time spent at City Lights represents a unique transition process. Some students come to City Lights immediately after being released from juvenile correction facilities, residential treatment centers, or psychiatric hospitals; City Lights represents their transition back into society. For other students, City Lights is a last chance in a less restrictive environment before placement in a residential or correctional facility is recommended. If improvement can be demonstrated at City Lights, an otherwise discouraging future can be dramatically altered.

While at City Lights, a student can work toward achievement of specific objectives in order to move on into the next phase of life. The process is highly individualized. The progress that is made is often subtle, even nearly imperceptible to an outside observer. Because of the extreme disadvantages and disabilities that students bring to City Lights, many traditional educational and career goals are unrealistic for them. Success must be measured in smaller, individualized ways. For example, when a student with a history of truancy begins to attend regularly at City Lights, a significant goal has been reached.

**Case Management.** To facilitate transition, City Lights begins simply by providing a consistent, safe, and caring environment. The relatively small size of the school makes it possible for each student to be known personally by several staff members. Each student in the program has a case manager who is responsible for coordinating the services to be provided to meet the student's transition needs. This case manager also provides psychological counseling and insures that students maintain appointments for individual and family therapy at local mental health centers and receive psychiatric and medical care when necessary. The case manager, teacher, and vocational counselor work with the student's families and outside advocates, such as Department of Human Services social workers, probation officers, lawyers, legal guardians, and group home workers, to develop an individualized educational and treatment plan.

**Pre-vocational Training.** One important aspect of transitional planning is preparation for work in the adult world; this is also the most challenging task for City Lights students. Most students at City Lights lack the basic reading, math, and vocational skills that are necessary for most jobs, as well as a basic understanding of fundamental work values. The vocational counselor must work with the students to address all these needs before successful transition to employment can take place. Sometimes the vocational counselor assists in placing a student in a job, and the student quickly fails to keep this job. This initial failure is used as a teaching tool to give the student a concrete understanding of what is necessary for success in a job. Classroom exercises focus on development of employment values, such as appropriate dress, punctuality, and politeness. The basic reading and writing skills necessary to complete job applications and read newspaper advertisements are also taught.

**Remedial Education.** At the core of the City Lights program is a basic remedial academic curriculum. On average, teenage students enter City Lights with reading and math skills at approximately the 5th grade level. City Lights uses a competency-based curriculum in which students have unlimited chances to master particular skills. The computerized Comprehensive Competencies Program is the school's primary curriculum tool. With this program, students progress individually through levels of mastery of subjects including reading, writing, math, history, and science. Ultimately, City Lights staff members assist some students to prepare for the GED (General Equivalency Diploma), although this goal is not suitable for all students.

**Substance Abuse Prevention.** The overwhelming influence of the drug culture has taken its toll on City Lights' student population. Though few students are serious substance abusers, many are involved in selling drugs. Staff members continuously strive to provide students with realistic alternatives to the apparent glamour of the drug trade. In group sessions, students discuss the role of drugs in society and the reasons that individuals become involved with them. Staff members work to discredit the positive image of the drug dealer and emphasize alternatives such as athletics and personal hobbies.

**Parenting.** Since many City Lights students have children of their own, child care is another need that must be managed. Case managers work with students to develop plans for child care. City Lights has recently implemented a system of day care centers in nearby neighborhood homes, supported by the District of Columbia government. Students can drop off their children on the way to school. These day care facilities also provide training in parenting skills to the students during the afternoons.

## Previous Research

A number of research studies have been conducted to identify the nature of City Lights students' transition from school back into society, with varied results. Of particular interest in these studies has been the rate of transition to more and less restrictive environments. L'Homme, Scaggs, Weissman, and Stein (1987) followed a sample of 52 students who left the City Lights program prior to October 1985. At disposition, 41 percent of these students had left the school for a more restrictive environment, such as a correction facility, residential placement, or psychiatric inpatient unit. After approximately one year, 38 percent of them were living in a more restrictive environment. L'Homme and LaCount (1991) studied the 167 students (ages 16–26) who were enrolled in the City Lights Workplace program, which targeted an older population of students and focused on career development in addition to remedial education and clinical case management. From this population, 66 students were interviewed over the telephone between 8 and 18 months after they had left the program. While 60 percent of the population had a history of criminal involvement on admission, only 9 percent were placed in a more restrictive environment at disposition. At follow-up, 15 percent of the 66 students were living in a more restrictive environment. Fifty-one percent were involved in either school, work, or vocational training. L'Homme, Evans and Curtin (1992) followed a random sample of 25 students, taken from the population of 229 who were enrolled between September 1989 and May 1992. At disposition, 20 percent of these students were going to a more restrictive environment. After 6 months, only 8 percent were in such a restrictive environment, and after 12 months, 12 percent. Furthermore, at the 12-month follow-up, 76 percent of the sample was involved in some kind of school, work, or vocational training, with a full 60 percent employed.

Taken together, these research findings reflect several changes that have taken place in the City Lights Program and the population it serves over time. In City Lights' early years, the relatively high percentage of students who left City Lights for more restrictive environments were going to residential treatment and psychiatric hospitals,

Photo courtesy City Lights School

Student Characteristics at Admission

| Student Characteristics | 1987 [1] | 1989 [2] | 1992 [3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average Age at Admission | | 17.9 | 17.4 |
| Average Months in Program | 10.0 | 9.9 | 11.5 |
| Males | 85% | 65% | 78% |
| Females | 15% | 35% | 22% |
| African Americans | 100% | 98% | 99% |
| Wards of DC | 51% | 23% | 23% |
| History of Juvenile Offense | | 60% | 82% |
| Time Spent in Juvenile Correction | 32% | | 51% |
| Time Spent in Psychiatric Hospital | | | 12% |
| Time Spent in Residential Treatment | | | 19% |
| Character/Conduct Disorder Diagnosis | 52% | 38% | 46% |

[1] L'Homme, Scaggs, Weissman & Stein (1987).
[2] L'Homme & LaCount (1991).
[3] All students who were enrolled at City Lights at some time between September 1, 1991 and August 31, 1992. For the follow-up research, only those students who were between the ages 16–21 at admission, who remained at City Lights for at least 3 months and who were terminated at some time during that year will be included.

rather than to correctional facilities (L'Homme, et al.,1987). There were many more students with serious mental illnesses, and fewer who had been through the juvenile justice system. In 1987, only 32 percent of the students had previously spent time in juvenile correction. In contrast, today, 50 percent of the students have spent time in juvenile correction, and the number of seriously mentally ill students has decreased considerably. Attitudes toward special education and institutionalization have also changed. Now, referral to residential treatment is limited to only those with the most extreme psychiatric needs. The explosion of the drug culture has created a new venue for urban youth to become entangled in the juvenile justice system.

Currently, few students at City Lights have been diagnosed with major psychotic disorders, yet all have been diagnosed as emotionally disturbed. Because these disadvantaged, inner-city adolescents have not received adequate services to alleviate their emotional disturbance, a significant number of them are also now juvenile delinquents. City Lights has adapted to meet the changing needs of this population within this continually changing social framework. The ultimate impact of this evolving program remains to be measured.

## Present Research

The current program of research is tracking students (ages 16-21) who leave the program over a 3-year period, beginning in September 1991. Data are collected from and about the students at several different points. At intake, all background information is recorded. The students' past residential placements, educational history, criminal record, and substance abuse history are all recorded. While the student is in the program, his or her attendance, academic and behavioral progress are recorded. When a student's enrollment is terminated, information about the student's experience in the program is recorded. Six months after students leave City Lights, they are interviewed briefly over the telephone about their experiences in the past months. Specifically, information about enrollment in school or vocational programs, employment, criminal offenses, children born, places of residence, and substance use are collected. After 12 months, the same students receive a more extended interview in person, about how their experiences at City Lights affected them. In addition to objective information about residential placements, continuation of school or vocational training, employment, and current substance use, the subjective experiences of the students are elicited. These extended interviews will include questions about aspects of the City Lights program that were most and least helpful, as well as the students' hopes and plans for the future.

Quantitative data from this research will provide an overall picture of what happens to students after they leave City Lights. This information will also be used to develop a statistical model to predict outcomes based on students' intake and in-program information. Qualitative data should also prove particularly useful. Some students may leave City Lights without having made any tangible improvements (i.e., they may leave City Lights for a more restrictive environment), but the choices

they make in the years that follow may be shaped by the therapeutic and educational experiences they had while at City Lights. The sense of personal worth and future orientation that are imparted at City Lights may not be clearly visible to the students in a time of crisis, but may gradually become realized in the months and years that follow. Thus, it is important to inquire about these qualitative outcomes.

## Early Findings

In the year between September 1991 and August 1992, 106 students were enrolled in the program, and 77 of these were terminated in the course of the year. The intake information for this group of students is shown in Table 1. A sample of 25 of these students has been selected for follow-up, and these follow-up interviews are currently under way. Of these 77 students who left the program in the course of the year, 14 were placed in a more restrictive environment.

## Implications for the Future

Identifying the impact of students' experiences prior to entering City Lights and their experiences while at the school on their experiences in the months and years that follow could be extremely valuable for future program development. Distinct categories of students may be experiencing divergent levels of success, but this would not be discernible to program staff without the benefit of this follow-up study. Perhaps students who leave City Lights to continue in mainstream public schools or vocational training programs will have entered City Lights with a set of circumstances different from those who leave City Lights for a more restrictive environment. With this knowledge, program staff can more efficiently direct appropriate resources to students who can benefit from them the [illegible]

## Conclusion

The current research, along with findings of previous studies (L'Homme, et al., 1987; L'Homme & LaCount, 1991; L'Homme et al., 1992), should provide insight into the delicate and difficult transition processes of students at City Lights School. The instability of their environments and the lack of supportive peer and family networks make the task of providing transition services particularly challenging. The progress made by every student is fragile. Given the harsh environments in which they live, one day's success can be followed by another day's crisis. Yet it is within these environments that City Lights must work.

Residential placement, which removes youths from their families and communities, is seen by many as the answer for these most difficult adolescents. But such placements do not last forever, and they are not effective in empowering the youth to function within their natural environments. Residential placements are also extremely costly and have not been shown to be more effective than community based alternatives (Knitzer, Steinberg & Fleish, 1990).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates that to the maximum possible, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled or in the "least restrictive environment." With its multifaceted psychoeducational treatment approach, City Lights persistently meets this challenge. Though so many others have given up hope for this young population, City Lights continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of the District of Columbia's most needy youth and to facilitate their transition to adulthood.

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# Community Life Options For Persons With Developmental Disabilities

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Photo courtesy Jeffrey Gliner

## Introduction

With the advancement of deinstitutionalization and normalization came the assumption that an improved quality of life for people with disabilities would be found in the community (Menolascino, 1977). Underlying deinstitutionalization and normalization is the concept of integration. But what kind of integration is really taking place in the community, and is quality of life as it relates to community integration of people with disabilities being addressed?

The deinstitutionalization of people with developmental disabilities, which began over a decade ago, has done much to bring people with significant disabilities out of institutional settings and into a variety of community living and working arrangements. In many cases, however, people with disabilities are still living in what could be described as a "mini-institutionalized environment." According to Crapps, Langone, and Swaim (1985), many people with disabilities still spend most of their leisure time inside their homes. They do not use public transportation but rely on walking or agency vehicles

Photo courtesy Jeffrey Gliner

for travel. In fact, they spend little time in community environments.

O'Connell (1988) described two types of isolation experienced by persons with significant disabilities: "private (lack of personal, intimate relationships) and public (lack of casual, day-to-day contacts)." Isolation is prevalent nation-wide, and is commonly addressed by either trying to rehabilitate people with disabilities so that they may be more like their non-disabled peers, or by organizing specialized programs which focus around the disabilities. The true need is to integrate persons with disabilities into the community as it presently exists, without attempting to change the individual or creating a mass of new expensive programs (O'Connell, 1988; Amado, 1988).

The approach to full integration of persons with disabilities into the community involves at the outset a reshaping of values and a restructuring of resources with the full intent of eventual natural inclusion. Heal (1988) discussed full integration as having "neutral value" where all people are included, all needs addressed, and all advantages are universally accessible. To achieve this goal, special intervention is called for up front. Heal (1988) calls this intervention, "Prosthetization, the provision of extraordinary resources to promote integration."

In the mid-1980s supported employment as a prosthetic model was devised and implemented nationwide, with the assumption that full access and integration into the work place would eventually translate into full integration and access into the community. This would have the additional result of increased quality of life for persons with disabilities. Although there is some evidence to suggest that the supported employment movement has altered quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities (Inge, Banks, Wehman, Hill & Shafer, 1988), two studies performed through Colorado State University's Transition Services Program (Sinnott-Oswald, Gliner, and Spencer, 1991; Starkey, 1990) have suggested that although supported employment leads to significant increases in integration at place of employment, there is little evidence to suggest increases in integration and quality of life *outside* of the place of employment. Two different methods of evaluation were used in these studies. One study used a traditional between groups design, with matching subjects, whereas the second study used an intensive design (case study approach). In neither case were significant increases in community integration nor quality of life observed,

especially in terms of active participation and choices.

In the past decade as supported employment has been developed and implemented, the guiding assumption has been that community based, integrated employment would solve the feelings of isolation and provide opportunities for natural friendships for individuals with developmental disabilities.

## Supported Recreation Intervention

In response to the above research conclusions, a supported recreation model for adults with developmental disabilities has been developed by Transition Services focusing on (1) creating an awareness of activities that are available; (2) providing support and encouragement as the consumer engages in chosen activities; (3) increasing community awareness and support through modeling effective and innovative methods to support individual consumers as they increase their recreation/leisure involvement; (4) coordinating opportunities for relationship building between the consumer and individuals in the community in order to foster independence and full integration; and (5) creating a volunteer network of support, for long-term program existence. This project, "Community Life Options," has been funded with a Field-Initiated Research grant through the U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

The supported recreation intervention described above is an interactive process that involves the participant, a paid recreation specialist, and individuals from the community. The targeted outcomes of the project are for project participants to: (1) develop an awareness of available recreation resources in their local communities; (2) brainstorm individualized recreation options; (3) initiate involvement in activities; (4) meet new people; (5) enhance interactive social skills; (6) develop and sustain an on-going network that encourages and supports community involvement; and (7) participate in planning efforts for community programs and recreational activities. During attainment of the above steps, a "recreation specialist" accompanies the participant into the community and acts as a mentor and "friend." At this point, the primary responsibility of the recreation specialist is to facilitate and model natural and appropriate interactions between the participant and the other people participating in the activity. Although fading of support by paid staff members occurs at the earliest possible time, it is a gradual process to ensure that interactions are occurring and support has been adopted by the community.

## Research Focus

A multimethod approach to the project has been undertaken (Brewer and Hunter, 1990). The idea underlying the multimethod approach is triangulation, or the use of three different methods toward validating a particular point or concept. The three different methods used in the project are case study, quantitative assessment with standardized instruments, and subjective observations by recreation specialists using guidelines from the quantitative instruments. *The focus of the present report will be case study data from the Community Life Options project.* Specifically, a model will be introduced that allows project staff to carry out the supported recreation intervention using participatory action research (Whyte, 1991).

The gap between research findings and dissemination of these research findings has been of concern to both researchers and participants in the research process. Although the problem of dissemination and its future application applies to most areas of social science, it has special implications for persons with disabilities. To solve this problem, Community Life Options project staff chose to use participatory action research. Most research demonstrating the use of this model with persons with disabilities, however, has been limited to persons with physical disabilities without cognitive deficits. One purpose of the present study/project has been to demonstrate the use of participatory action research while working with people with developmental disabilities toward improving recreation and leisure within and outside of the work place.

## Case Study

Figure 1 shows the project's participatory action model, participant-back-to-participant, modified from Rhoades and Booth (1982), that project staff have followed for service delivery. The description of the participatory research model as depicted in Figure 1 is as follows:

In Step 1, the participant has a need related to quality of life issues. The recreation specialist(s) assess the participant's need. This assessment may be performed as a team or individually. The assessment is then presented to the participant, and an agreement is reached between the participant and recreation specialist concerning the participant's needs. This agreement results in a common definition. Step 2 involves the Community Life Options (CLO) team addressing the participant's need. The term interdisciplinary is used because the Community Life Options team represents backgrounds of recreation, special education, occupational therapy, human development, and psychology. It should be noted that the participant and his or her family are also part of the interdisciplinary team in the present conceptualization of participatory action research. Once the solution is agreed upon by the interdisciplinary team, the intervention is created and initiated with the participant (Step 3). It should be noted that Step 3 is a continual interaction between the participant, the recreation specialist, and individuals from the interdisciplinary team. Feedback is constantly provided to make changes where necessary. In some cases, this feedback may necessitate a "jump"

backward to Step 2 to redefine the participant's needs. The last step (Step 4) is the evaluation of the intervention with the participant.

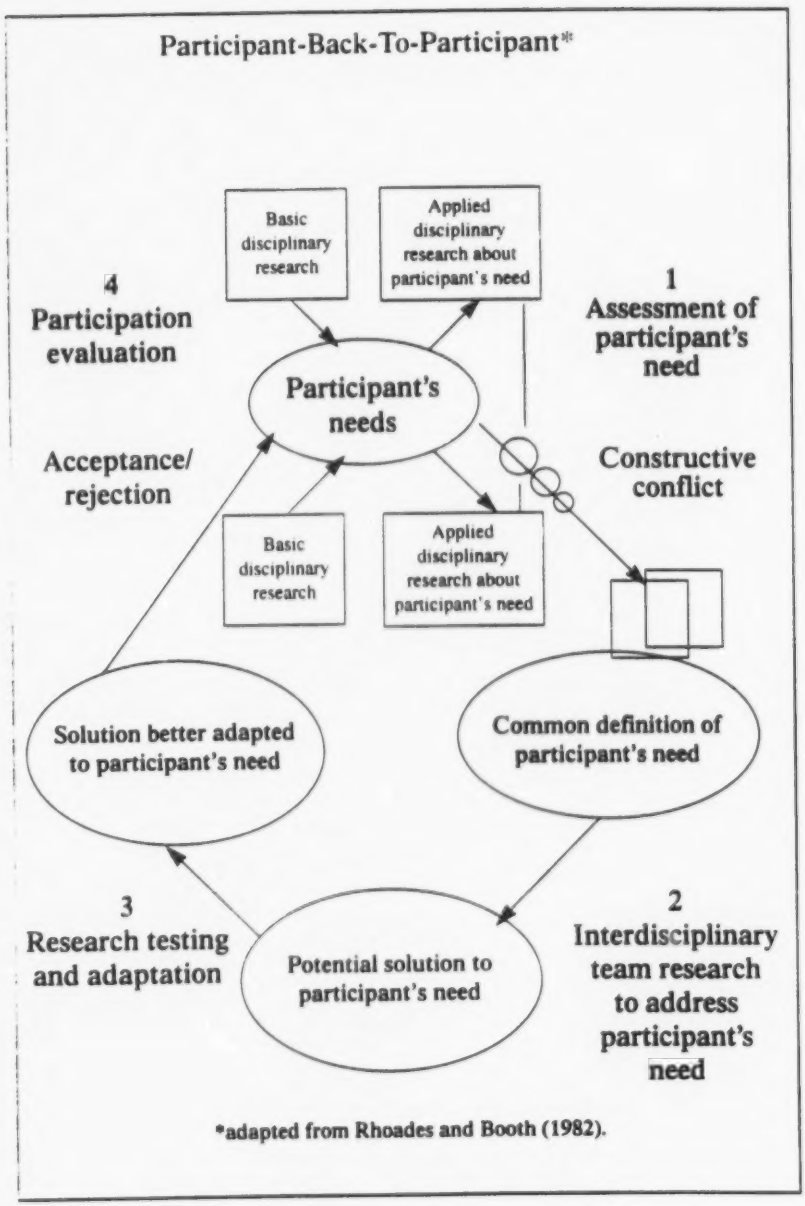
Three Case Studies are introduced. All three individuals described are in supported employment (versus sheltered work). As the individuals are described, they will be listed according to increasingly challenging levels of disability, as well as increasingly structured residential settings. This latter element is becoming more evident as a variable impacting on the success of the supported recreation model.

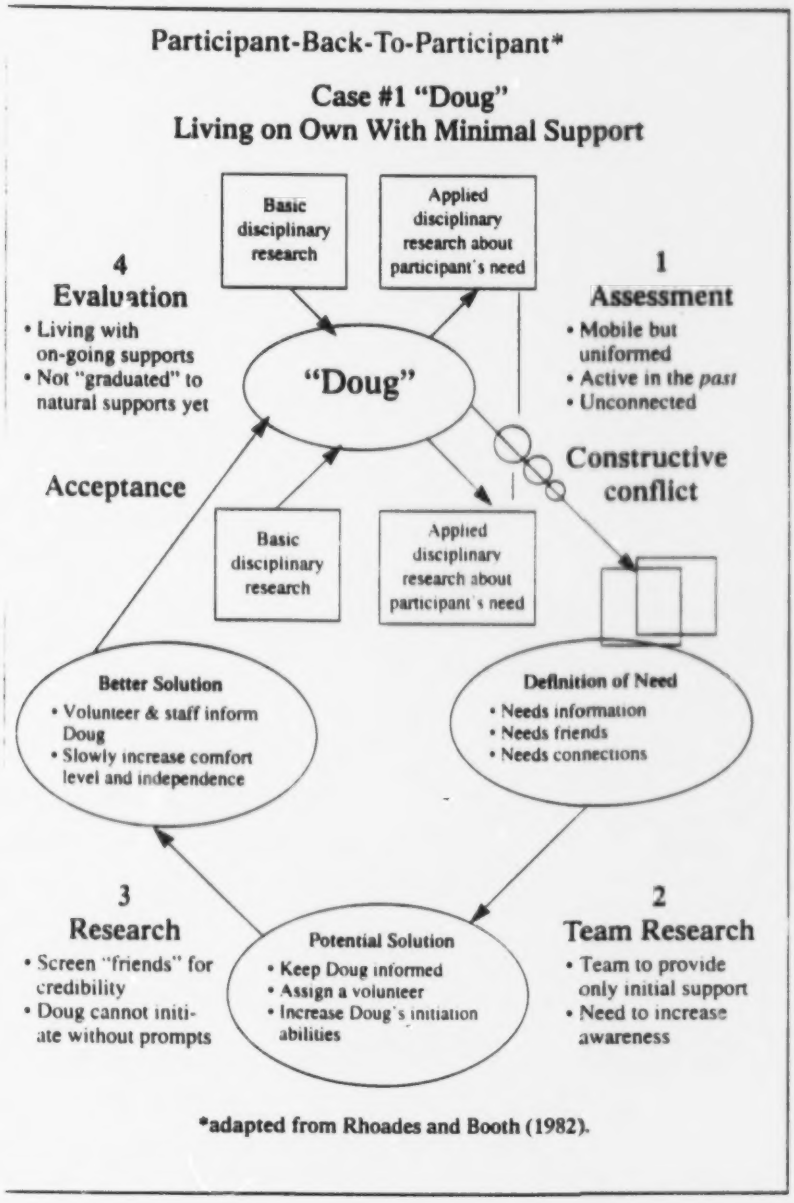
### *Doug*

Doug is a man in his early 30s. He lives on his own in an apartment, with minimal supports provided to him.

In the **Assessment** phase it was determined that Doug was fully capable of getting around his town (approximately 30,000 people), but was uninformed of opportunities available in his community. In the past, when Doug had been in school, he had been very active and involved in his community. Since leaving school years ago, he has become fairly disconnected from friends and activities. Additionally, Doug is very shy and has a difficult time asking for support, or initiating activity with others outside his home. Little **Constructive Conflict** arose between the various service providers working with Doug, and Doug, because his team is very small (due to his low support needs), and because Doug is so motivated to become involved in community-integrated recreation/leisure activities. Once the team came to consensus, it was agreed by everyone involved (including Doug), that he needed more information concerning what opportunities were available in the community, that he definitely needed to develop a small network of "friends," and that he needed "connections" in the community to keep him up-to-date on what is going on.

As the team prepared to work with Doug (**Team Research**), they decided that he would probably need support only early-on to establish his connections and try new activities in the community. The project staff would support Doug (**Potential Solution**) to develop skills to increase his awareness of opportunities. Support would include keeping Doug informed of potential recreational activities, assigning a volunteer to accompany Doug to activities and events of his choosing, and teaching Doug how to initiate activities and outings with others (deal with his shyness). As Doug began receiving support further **Research** by project staff showed that Doug was very susceptible to perceived friendships, even to the point of trusting people who lit-






*adapted from Rhoades and Booth (1982).

erally exploited and robbed him. The team had to readjust the service model to include screening supposed "friends," as Doug became closer to people. This was done with Doug's permission. Additionally, it became evident that Doug was not able to initiate contacts without prompts from others, and that this might not become a skill for him, regardless of the level of support or training.

A proposed **Better Solution** involved having the project staff and assigned volunteer "friend" keep Doug informed of recreation events and options, and work to slowly decrease the level of support, instead of assuming that supports could be faded very quickly. Doug would be the one to make the decision about support levels. Doug has accepted that solution, and early **Evaluations** by him show a high level of satisfaction with the support model. Recently Doug went on a weekend-long ski trip which was comprised half of persons with disabilities and half persons who were volunteers/friends. Since then he and a volunteer have gone on another ski trip, as well as a ski trip with a co-worker (Doug had not been skiing since he was in school 12 years ago!). Additionally, Doug has initiated obtaining a drivers license, with assistance from project staff. This shows remarkable improvement and change for Doug in the area of initiation skill development. Doug has a very active volunteer working with him.

### *Jack*

Jack is in his mid 20s, and has had an extremely difficult time with his community participation since he transitioned out of school. His one consistent recreation/leisure activity has been his participation in a dance group for young adults with developmental disabilities (segregated activity).

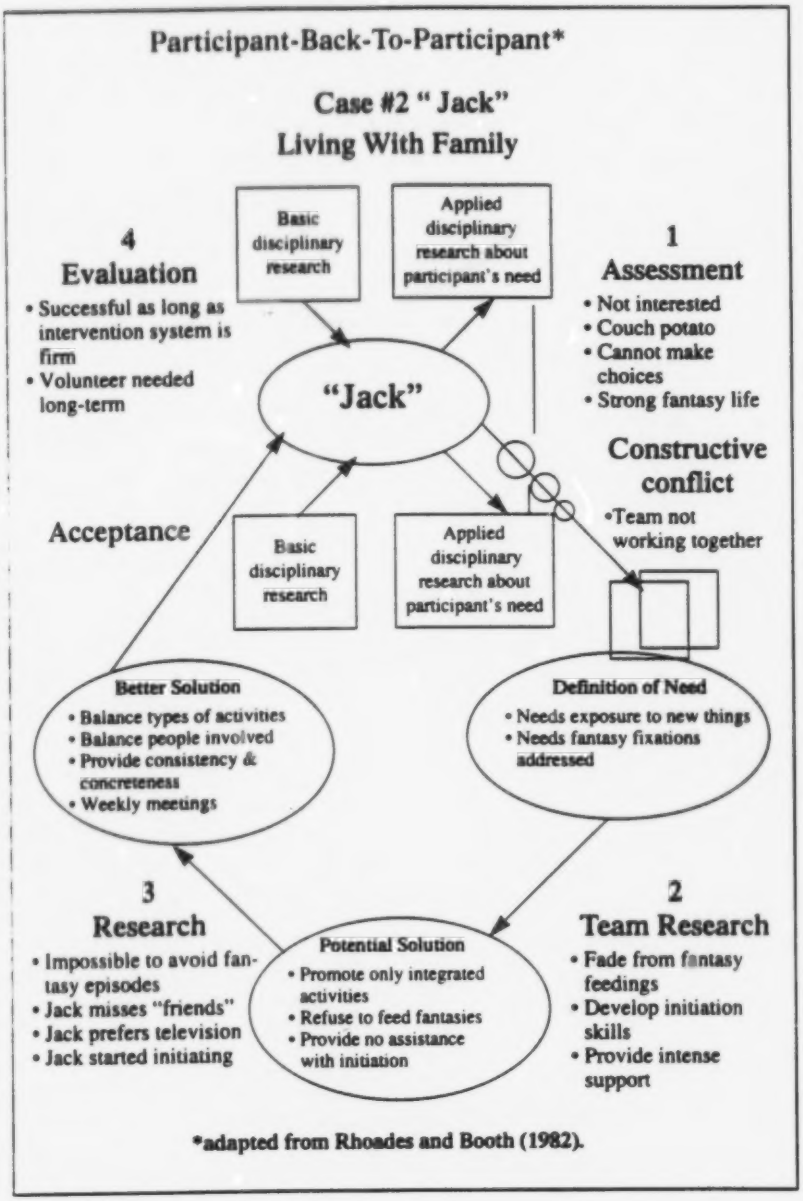
In his initial **Assessment** it was determined that Jack was not particularly interested in participating in the CLO project, but was encouraged to do so by his family. He described himself as a "couch potato," and appeared to prioritize television viewing over other leisure-time alternatives. As the project staff interviewed him, and as his employment history showed, Jack has a difficult time making choices, and seemed to fare better when others chose activities for him. A challenge to the team presented itself in Jack's strong fantasy life, which seemed to entertain him constantly. Jack lives at home with his parents but, nevertheless, has several service providers working with him in employment and case management activities. **Constructive Conflict** arose immediately in the assessment and needs-determination process, as

each grouping of people disagreed on Jack's needs (project staff v. adult service providers v. parents v. Jack). This conflict slowed down service delivery significantly as everyone involved tried to reach consensus. Eventually the **Definition of Need** came to be that Jack needed much more exposure to new things to inform him better so that decisionmaking might become easier. Everyone believed that Jack simply needed more targeted information about options and opportunities. Also, the team (perhaps not Jack) determined that Jack's fantasy life must be addressed before recreational support would do much good.

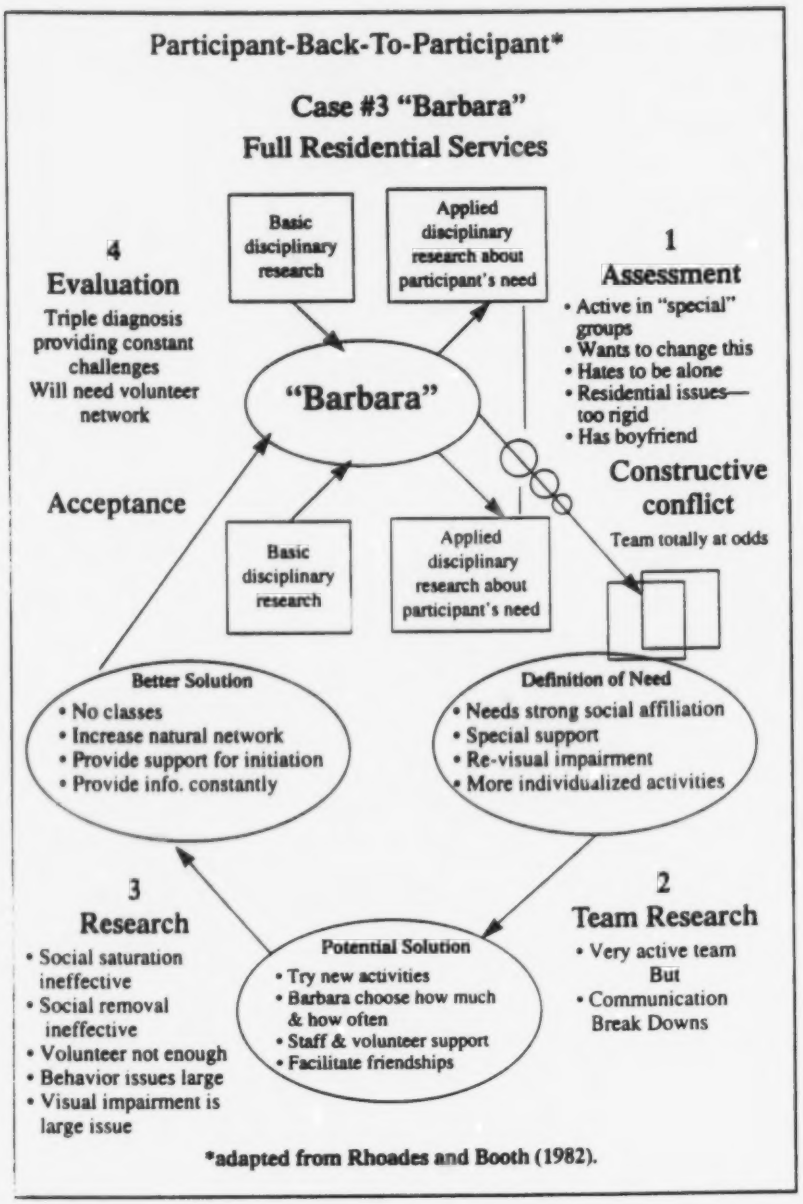
As the team worked further with Jack, **Team Research** concluded that a slow-fading of toleration with Jack's fantasy life might be helpful, rather than immediate, stringent reality-testing. The project staff would also work with Jack to develop his initiation skills. Finally, the team concluded that Jack was going to need intense, long-term support in order to be able to participate fully in the project. The **Potential Solution** included the staff promoting only integrated activities, since Jack was already very involved in segregated or isolated ones. The team would work hard at fading on "fantasy-feeding" with Jack and encourage him to deal with real world issues and activities. Additionally, the team would begin by telling Jack he must initiate all contact with project staff related to accessing activities.

Once support services began, further **Research** showed that Jack was unable or unwilling to suspend his fantasy episodes; that he missed his friends with developmental disabilities (since he was doing very few things with them); and that he still preferred television to participation in the supported recreation project. The good news was that eventually Jack began to initiate activities with project staff, something that had seemed impossible early on.

With this information, a **Better Solution** was developed, with input from Jack and the others involved. Jack's activities would become more balanced (with people with and without disabilities, and with and without shades of supporting Jack's fantasy life). Additionally, the staff would structure services so that they were much more concrete and consistent, including weekly meetings among Jack and the project staff.




Jack has **Accepted** the service model (something that had been in doubt for many months). Jack's **Evaluation** is that he will stay involved in the project on a day-to-day basis, but is satisfied for now. Project staff perceive that Jack will be successful in accessing recreation/leisure activities only as long as he has a strong, consistent, and firm intervention system in place.




*adapted from Rhoades and Booth (1982).

Also, Jack will need volunteer support in the future. In recent months Jack has gone on an extended, integrated weekend ski trip, and has begun participating in a "unified" bowling "fun league" consisting of people with and without disabilities. Previously, Jack acknowledged a strong fear of people with physical disabilities. Since his participation in the integrated ski weekend, Jack has gotten to spend time with people with such disabilities and feels much more comfortable when he is around them. He is happy about this.

### *Barbara*

Barbara is a woman in her 40s who has a developmental disability, a near total visual impairment, and a severe emotional disorder.

In her initial **Assessment** she described active involvement with "special" groups (groups for people with developmental disabilities). She expressed a desire to broaden her social group to include people without disabilities, in more typical community participation. She made it clear that she strongly prefers not to be alone. She has a boyfriend, but their time together is sporadic. Barbara lives in a closely supervised apartment, with a roommate not of her own choosing. The residential program she is involved in is very rigid, and dictates her social life to a large extent. **Constructive Conflict** between team members (project staff, residential staff, case management staff, and Barbara) began immediately due to the rigidity of Barbara's residential program and strong disagreements about Barbara's needs. The initial **Definition of Need** agreed upon included acknowledging Barbara's strong need to be with others. Consensus was reached on the special supports needed related to Barbara's visual impairments. Some of the team members additionally felt that Barbara needed more one-on-one social opportunities (in contrast to the group activities to which she is accustomed).

**Team Research** concluded that even though Barbara had a very active service team, the communication between team members was not at all effective or constructive. Consensus, therefore, was not forthcoming on the service-delivery model, and remains problematic to the present. The **Potential Solution** developed by project staff (not the entire team) was that Barbara would be given the opportunity to try many new activities, and that she would choose how much and how often she wanted to participate in them. Additionally, Barbara would be given intense staff and volunteer support as she tried new activities. A long-range goal would be to facilitate some friendships. It was felt by project staff that one friend would not be sufficient to meet Barbara's strong so-

cial needs. Further Research showed that neither social saturation (i.e., assisting Barbara in as many activities as possible around as many people as possible), nor social removal (providing consequences of dropping activity classes or having to leave when her behaviors became totally unacceptable) were effective in meeting Barbara's needs. More than had been anticipated, Barbara's behaviors made success in social involvement very difficult. A volunteer accompanying Barbara to events (rather than staff) was not more effective. Additionally, Barbara's visual impairment offered more of a challenge to integrating Barbara into the community than had been expected.

The team, with some input from Barbara, developed a Better Solution model, in which Barbara would not enroll in any more activity classes. Additionally, she would be given information constantly concerning activity options, and would then be provided as much support as needed to initiate participation in those activities. Finally, the project staff would work diligently to develop a natural network of supports for Barbara for the long-term, since her need for intense support to successfully access recreation/leisure activities will be life-long.

Barbara has verbally Accepted the service model, though her behaviors occasionally seem to be communicating something else. It is apparent that a network of volunteers (instead of just one) will be needed long-term to support her as she accesses the community for recreation/leisure activities. This will prevent volunteer burn-out, and will provide her with varieties of interactions and friendships. Her behaviors will be of great concern, though, for many volunteers, and, therefore, may be a problem in volunteer recruitment and retention. At this time, Barbara's behaviors are still an issue, and she has begun a journal with the support of project staff to try to record and track her feelings. She has begun meeting with a music therapy student once a week to see if this will help with her emotional instability. She has one consistent volunteer, as well as a volunteer through the local "Larimer (County) Animal-People Partnership," since she loves animals. The project staff are frequently assessing Barbara and trying out new "solutions" with her. She remains an enthusiastic participant, even with the challenges.

## Summary, New Challenges and Future Directions

Three case studies have been presented which are representative of the more than 20 participants who have received the supported recreation intervention. For some, the intervention has been successful and has created new community options. For others, more support has been needed and may always be needed. Some participants have not experienced increased community options. The other research methods used by project staff have provided inconclusive results at present. The quantitative assessments using standardized instruments have not yielded significant group changes, but the subjective observations with recreation specialists have shown changes in a positive direction.

Discussions about participatory action research at the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps conference (TASH 1992) showed that confusion still exists among researchers and participants. This confusion revolves around (1) the role of the participant relative to the researcher in terms of planning, carrying out, and dissemination of the research; (2) the level of involvement of the researcher and his or her views of how society has treated the participants; (3) the difference between participatory action research, participatory research, and action research; and (4) the relationship of PAR to quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (naturalist) paradigms of research.

The need to increase community integration and quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities who are involved in supported or sheltered work is critical. *Even more important, however, is the need to involve people with developmental disabilities as active partners in the research process.* If the CLO participatory research model is successful, the gap between research and participant will be shortened, and dissemination of research findings will follow.

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# H.E.L.P. Career Opportunities

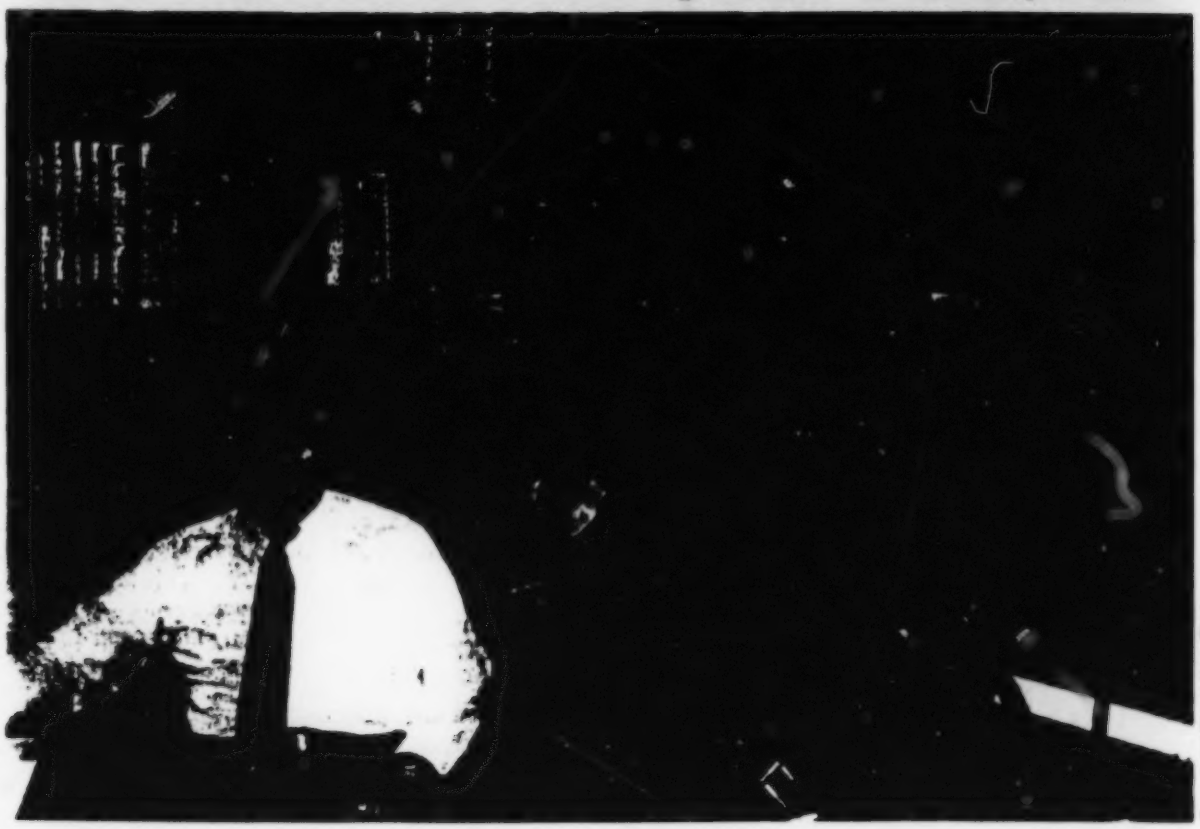

Photo courtesy Victoria Amey-Flippin

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The Handicap Educational Liaison Program (H.E.L.P.) at Northeastern Illinois University is committed to affording students with disabilities equal opportunity for post-secondary education by providing reasonable accommodations and services. Located in Chicago, H.E.L.P. provides assistance to students with documented physical or learning disabilities based upon diagnosed need. In 1991, the H.E.L.P. Office decided to take its commitment one step farther and plan, implement, and disseminate a model program for use at urban commuter colleges that would facilitate the career placement opportunities of college students with disabilities.



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**Overview of the Project: Resources, Components, Outcomes**

| University Resources | Project Components | Project Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| H.E.L.P. Office | Component 1: Student Development | Increased Vocational Empowerment of Students with Disabilities |
| Career Placement | Component 2: Job Development and Placement | Establishment of University and Community Internships |
| Student Counseling Office | Component 3: Inservice Training | Increased Knowledge/ Awareness of Students with Disabilities |
| Special Education Department | | Creation of a Replicable Model of Career Development for Urban Commuter Institutions |

With this goal in mind, H.E.L.P. was awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education and was awarded a grant to develop a program entitled: "Developing Career Placement Opportunities for College Students with Disabilities: A Plan for an Urban Commuter Institution." Approximately 100 students are targeted to be involved in the three-year project period with disabilities including learning, sensory impairments, and severe physically disabling conditions. The project activities are designed to incorporate the efforts of four university departments, i.e., H.E.L.P., Career Placement, Student Counseling, and Special Education.

The project also attempts to facilitate the continuation of services once the grant period ends and to enhance the quality of life of the participants through academic and career services before and after graduation—services that will introduce H.E.L.P. participants to career exploration culminating with career development and placement.

There are three major objectives of the project, each with a corresponding project component and set of activities. The major objectives of the project are as follows:

(1) to increase the vocational empowerment of students with disabilities by providing coursework, counseling, and a mentoring program designed to promote career awareness, personal confidence, decision-making capabilities, job seeking skills, and knowledge of services and legal issues related to disability;

(2) to establish a strong network of university based and community based work experience sites and internships for students prior to graduation and provide opportunities for placement upon graduation; and

(3) to provide inservice training and technical assistance to university faculty, staff, and community employers that will raise awareness of the needs of adults with disabilities in academic experiences and competitive employment.

## Project Component 1: Student Development and Empowerment

The purpose of this component of the project is to enhance the vocational empowerment of students with disabilities. Student participation in aspects of this component are voluntary but highly recommended by H.E.L.P. Office staff. Specifically, this component provides coursework and workshops designed to promote career awareness. The course entitled Career and Life Planning (3 credit hours) was already in place at the university, but was adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Individualized vocational assessments are included in this course and it is offered twice each year of the project, only to students with disabilities. Informal workshop sessions on resume writing and interviewing skills are also planned to utilize skills developed in the course.

Personal and career counseling is available to all university students, but regularly scheduled counseling sessions are available to participants. Poor interpersonal relationship skills, low self-confidence, and unrealistic expectations about adult life are common in H.E.L.P. participants. Counseling helps reinforce and expand skills addressed in the Career and Life Planning course. The results of the vocational assessments are also discussed within the individual counseling sessions.

In addition to coursework and counseling, a mentorship program for students was established to help students

form professional friendships and interact with appropriate role models.

University faculty and staff were solicited; as well as, professionals with disabilities in the Chicago area to participate in the program. A minimum of 15 matches will be made each project year, with several planned group activities, after H.E.L.P. pairs Mentors and Mentees.

## Project Component 2: Job Development and Placement

The purpose of this component of the project is to establish a strong network of university-based and community-based work experience sites and internships related to students' major area of study. Specifically, this component will:

(a) develop employment sites, internships and relationships with Chicago area businesses, industries, public service and social service organizations to provide students with work experiences prior to graduation and placement upon graduation which will result in formal cooperative agreements;

(b) develop employments sites and internships on campus to provide students with work experience prior to graduation or prior to seeking off-campus employment; and

(c) establish an Advisory Board composed of representatives from Chicago area businesses, industries, public service agencies, and social service organizations to provide technical assistance to the H.E.L.P Office and Career Placement Services in facilitating the employment of students with disabilities.

In order to establish off-campus employment opportunities, H.E.L.P. hired full-time Employment Specialists to work closely with the Director of Placement (a project staff member) to identify sites that were most likely to accept students with disabilities as interns or part-time employees. As sites were identified, the Employment Specialists screened students for possible placement.

Photo courtesy Victoria Amey-Pippin

Specific internships and/or part-time job descriptions and responsibilities were developed with interested employers. Sites were sought that would provide students with experience related to their major area of study prior to graduation.

During Year 1 of the project, the focus was on establishing a small number of quality sites, i.e. 5 to 10, that would employ 1 to 5 students. The Employment Specialists worked closely with the employer and the student to determine accommodations needed at the site and to make the necessary arrangements for transportation to and from the site. During years 2 and 3 of the project, additional sites will be developed and strong ongoing relationships will be established with participating employers. In three years, formal cooperative agreements will be developed in which Northeastern's responsibility to provide qualified applicants and needed technical assistance and employers' commitments to hire students with disabilities will be clearly identified.

Developing on-campus work experiences for students has involved (a) integrating students into already existing employment opportunities and (b) developing appropriate internships. Work-study and student aide positions exist in the library, administrative offices, and nearly all academic departments. Few H.E.L.P. participants had taken advantage of these opportunities because they were not fully aware of how to apply for positions and/or because their physical

or learning limitations interfered with their ability to apply for positions and meet job responsibilities.

The problem of lack of awareness and deficit skills will be addressed by the Student Development Component and job accommodation and locating appropriate positions within the university are handled by the Employment Specialists, as described for off-campus employment. By the end of Year 1 of the project, a minimum of 7 students are targeted to hold work-study or student-aide positions. This aspect of the Job Development and Placement Component will also include integrating students with disabilities into the typical on-campus career development activities. Activities that include pre-employment interviews, seminars with professionals in their field of interest, job fairs and recruitment days. In addition, students with disabilities will be taken to off-campus job fairs and recruitment days, as are other special interest groups on campus.

## Project Component 3: Inservice Training and Technical Assistance

This program component's purpose is to develop and implement an inservice training and technical assistance program for university faculty and staff and community employers that will promote awareness of an provision of services to students with disabilities. Specifically, this component will:

a) develop, refine and disseminate a set of curriculum material for inservice training about college students with disabilities that can be adapted for use with university faculty, student support services staff and community employers;

(b) provide inservice training and technical assistance to approximately 350 university faculty, 100 student support services staff, including a focus on staff involved in career development, and community employers over the three-year grant period; and

(c) plan and implement a model for providing inservice training and technical assistance to new university and staff and community employers which will continue once the grant period has ended.

Inservice curriculum about individuals with disabilities suitable for university faculty and staff and community employers will be adapted from sources in the fields of special education and adult rehabilitation. Information will be collected, adapted and synthesized in the five major content areas: (1) learning and behavioral characteristics of adults with disabilities; (2) legal aspects of disabilities; (3) accommodating persons with disabilities in the workplace; (4) instructional support and counseling strategies; and (5) transition and career placement strategies. The final product for this component of the project will be a trainer's handbook organized according to the content areas described above with case study examples, training activities, written materials for handouts, and suggestions for training formats.

Following refinement of the materials and inservice process by end of Year 2 of the project, the handbook will be made available to other institutions of higher education in the Chicago area and across the country.

During Year 1 of the project, training and technical assistance will be held primarily for the approximately 100 university staff members responsible for student support services including career placement personnel, counselors and tutors; for civil service staff in departments where students have been placed for work study or internship programs; and for community employers.

For student support services staff, inservice training will consist of a minimum of four 2–hour workshop sessions with additional training arranged as requested. For other university staff and community employers, training will consist of a minimum of two 1-hour sessions with additional training/technical assistance arranged as requested.

Training for community employers may be arranged on campus for small groups or conducted at the employment sites. Training and technical assistance will expand to include university faculty and administrative staff during Years 2 and 3 of the project. For this group, training will consist of a minimum of two 45 minute sessions with additional training/technical assistance arranged as requested. Whenever possible, these sessions will be scheduled during regular departmental meeting time so that attendance is high.

The Project Trainer/Consultant, who is a professor in the Department of Special Education, will provide the training and technical assistance with the assistance of four graduate students in the department. Graduate students will receive 3-to-6 credit hours for their participation in the project to be applied towards their M.A. degrees. For new faculty, planning is being conducted to train and provide technical assistance during Year 2 of the project. It will be implemented during the last part of Year 3 of the project.

The Project Director, Project Trainer/Consultant, Vice Presidents of the university, the Affirmative Action Officer, and other critical support staff will meet throughout Year 2 of the project to begin a plan for integrating the inservice training and technical assistance into existing training and literature for new employees. This plan will also include a procedure for orienting new community employers that will be undertaken by career services staff.

## Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of this project will be both formative and summative, and will produce quantifiable data whenever possible.The evaluation activities will be conducted in a continuous fashion throughout the project year, and coordinated by someone who is not directly involved in the project. Some of the activities that will be addressed are as follows:

**Student Development—Component 1**

- The number of students involved in the project.
- The success of the Mentor Program in bringing professionals and students together.
- What specific interactions took place to facilitate career potential of mentees?
- Did students increase their career awareness and career enhancing skills?
- Were students satisfied with the coursework, counseling, and mentorship?

**Job Development And Placement—Component 2**

- Were appropriate contacts made and developed with off-campus sites?
- Were appropriate contacts made and developed with on-campus-sites?
- Were the expected number of students placed in part-time jobs and internships?
- What was the level of satisfaction of employers and students?
- How successful were students in their positions?

**Inservice Training And Technical Assistance—Component 3**

- Were curriculum materials developed and revised?
- Was inservice training conducted for the expected number of participants?
- Was technical assistance provided as necessary?
- Were participants satisfied with the training?
- Was a plan to train new university staff and community employers devised?

Nondiscrimatory employment practices have been adhered to and disabled employees have been hired when possible (one of the Employment Specialist and all work-study staff). After work-study staff are trained by the H.E.L.P. Office these students apply for employment on and off campus.

Human resources at Northeastern Illinois University have been utilized by (a) involving graduate students in special education each year of the Project who will receive credit hours for their participation in training activities; (b) using the Dean of Academic Development to conduct evaluation and dissemination activities; and (c) planning for the increased involvement of non-project staff from Career Services and Student Counseling.

The focus of this project is the final stage of the higher education experience, i.e. the step from career readiness to career placement. In developing the capacity of career placement services at a large urban commuter university to provide pre-employment and employment opportunities for students with disabilities, we will hopefully enable students to become competively employed in a manner similar to nondisabled individuals upon graduation.

The long-term impact on the capacity of the institution to better service the career needs of students with disabilities in a broad sense tests the principles of the Regular Education Initiative, i.e., the provision of special services within the context of the typical environment, at the university level. How well this approach works at Northeastern, the problems encountered, and the solutions found will be well-documented, for the purpose of making the process easier for others.

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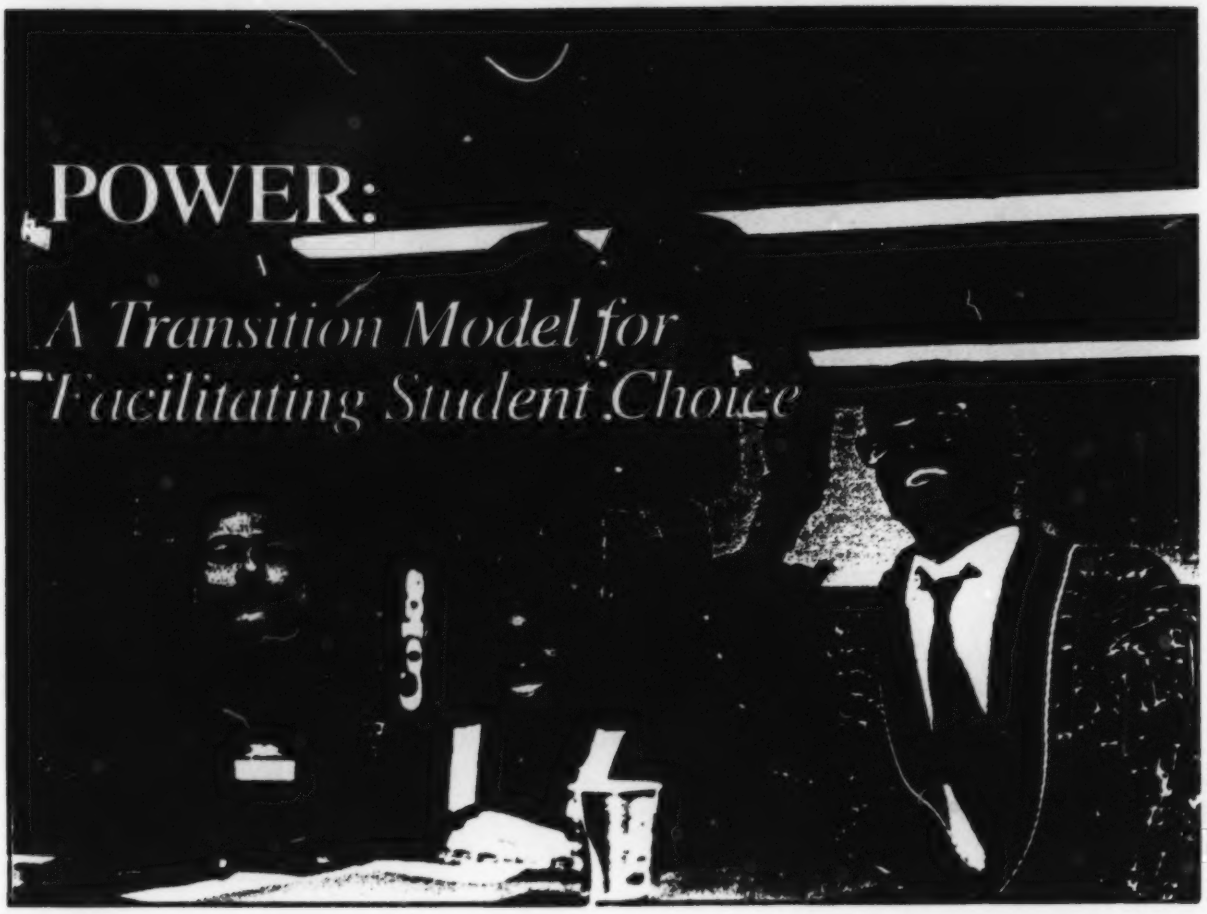
# POWER:

## *A Transition Model for Facilitating Student Choice*




**Kay Holjes**
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### Background

The progression from childhood to adulthood is a complex one for all students, and the presence of a disability often exacerbates the process. Likewise, the process for families gradually to become less protective and transfer responsibility to the child entering adulthood is filled with ambiguities. During adolescence, separation from parental attachment and resulting autonomy demands the development of self-concept, formation of individual attitudes and behavioral styles in social and sexual arenas, and formation of vocational plans and life aspirations (Bachman et al., 1969; Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1968; Newman & Newman, 1979). Wolfensberger (1972) emphasized that the amount of self-direction and self-determination possible for any person depends on factors within a person, as well as the opportunities that are available to that person.

For persons with developmental disabilities, the adolescent period is often marked by increased turmoil and stress as they attempt to define their relationships within society and the roles they will assume. Conflicting role expectations of family, friends, and professionals (Zetlin & Turner, 1985) often complicate the process. For instance, the family may expect that their young adult will remain in a protected environment after graduation, while professionals may expect the same person to take the prudent risks associated with working in the community. The literature is replete with statistics on unemployment, poor social skills, lack of integration in community activities, and other inadequacies that are related to expectations of independence that are placed on young adults with disabilities (Rusch & Chadsey-Rusch, 1985;

Wehman et al., 1988; Taylor et al., 1987; Wehman & Moon, 1988; ICD Survey, 1986).

The discrepancy between public entitlement programs and eligibility programs complicates the reality of negotiating these barriers. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act all eligible children with disabilities who require special education or related services are entitled to a free appropriate public education (*Federal Register*, September 29, 1992). Many states extend this entitlement through the age of 21. These same people often find many obstacles upon entering the adult service system. For instance, individual eligibility must be established for each adult service program, and people may be required to pay personally for the service. Additionally, there are often long waiting lists for adult services. Such factors make effective transition services critical for young adults with disabilities who aim to succeed in a world that is filled with barriers for them.

## Agency Response

Responding to the gaps and barriers in services between adolescence and adulthood, Employment Opportunities, Inc. conceptualized Project POWER (Power Options for Work, Education, and Recreation). The agency is a private nonprofit organization located in Raleigh, North Carolina, which provides community based vocational and related services to adults with disabilities.

Employment Opportunities was awarded funding for Project POWER through a three-year transition grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Employment Opportunities operated the project in conjunction with the local city-county public school system. Project POWER focused on increasing the presence of persons with moderate and severe developmental disabilities in natural community settings. A holistic approach of addressing work, education, and recreation exposed public school students to a broad array of community options so that more informed choices could be made during the transition to adulthood. The project also was designed to explore and demonstrate students' functional abilities in community settings, as related to their future potential success in such settings. An educational component of the project conveyed findings to the general public, school personnel, families, students, and adult service providers.

## Students and Staff

Fifteen students were selected to participate in Project POWER based on age and severity of disability. All were 16 years old in the first year of the project and were enrolled in self-contained classrooms. The project participants were in six classrooms in five different schools. Nine students were in classrooms for students labeled Trainable Mentally Handicapped; two were in classrooms for students labeled Severely Mentally Handicapped; two were in a classroom for students labeled Autistic; and two were in a classroom for students labeled Multiply Handicapped/Mentally Retarded.

I.Q. scores for those with a primary disability of mental retardation ranged from less than 13 to 75, with an average I.Q. of 38. Forty-three percent of the students had more than one diagnosed disability. Thirty-three percent were Caucasian, 67 percent African American. Sixty-seven percent were male, 33 percent female. Rural and urban residential settings were split 50–50. Approximately 60 percent of the students' caretakers were employed, yet fit the description of "working poor." Sixty percent of the students lived with a single parent, a foster parent, or a grandparent. Of the 22 caretakers, six were unemployed due to a disability.

Formal project staff included a part-time Project Director, a part-time Project Coordinator, a part-time Family Services Coordinator, and 2.5 Training Specialists who worked directly with the students. Education, psychology, and recreation consultants, and an External Evaluator were involved. Many collaborative personnel from the public school system, other adult service agencies, and parent groups contributed to project activities. The Transition Institute personnel with the University of Illinois provided technical assistance.

## Service Design and Delivery

**Family services.** Project staff met with each student and family in the home to develop comprehensive knowledge about the students participating in Project POWER. During the home visits, staff shared information about the project and educational materials related to transition from school to employment. Educational seminars initially were held for families on a regular basis, but attendance was low regardless of the time or day of the meeting. Findings revealed that many families lacked transportation, did not have an orientation to attending meetings, and/or were working during the hours of the meeting. The overall preference seemed to be for individual meetings in the student's home. Another finding was that many of the families were illiterate, so printed materials were an ineffective method of education. Changes were made to accommodate these findings by providing educational services through telephone conversations and home visits.

Family services varied according to individual need. The majority of the training requests from families were for sexuality training techniques, behavioral intervention strategies, wills and estates, adaptive equipment resources, and availability of vocational and residential adult service programs. The project gathered and shared a wealth of information on these topics.

Sensing that many families had similar informational needs, Employment Opportunities sponsored a one-day statewide conference for family members interested in transition. Vocational Rehabilitation personnel helped plan, advertise, and sponsor the conference.

**Vocational exploration.** Project staff participated in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at each school, with an average of three vocational objectives per student written into the IEP. Services were based on the premise that vocational choices and decisions are made better when people have been exposed to and have experienced options. Thus, students learned about many types of work and work settings through tours, speakers, trial work experiences, and paid employment. Experience included exploration of occupations represented in the community. To organize these experiences, similar positions were clustered, and then assigned to occupational areas—clerical, service, agricultural, benchwork, processing, and miscellaneous. Students made on-site visits to a business in each of the job clusters, with project Training Specialists arranging and directly supervising these activities. Students visited individually, or in groups with no more than three students each visit.

A variety of techniques was used to teach students individual choice and decision making skills. Students talked with employees at their jobs. Employers provided employee handbooks and job descriptions. Training Specialists took photographs and video tapes of work sites to facilitate follow-up discussion of what students observed. Students learned nuances about particular positions of interest from these discussions, as well as using information from the Employment Security Commission to gain general knowledge about position requirements and employment trends in the community.

In the early stages of the project, students chose any job for a trial work experience, without regard to abilities and qualifications. In this manner, with the support of project staff, they learned about their interests and abilities for selected occupations. In the latter stages of the project, staff became more involved with career counseling based on job skill competencies observed and recorded during the job try-outs.

Photo courtesy Kay Hedges

Students were paid for all work experience (including job try-outs) either through project funds or by the employer. Project staff were diligent in promoting student input into how to spend their earnings, but families did not consistently accept this. An interesting finding was that in many cases the families used student earnings to help pay for basic family living expenses. It is projected that this was due to the economic level of most of the families served. In some cases, the students chose to contribute their earnings to the family. In most cases, however, the families made the decisions with minimal opinions sought from the students.

**Educational services.** The project found that teachers were most interested in detailed information about the planning and delivery of transition services. (Please note that this project operated before the federal mandate for transition services through IDEA.) Therefore, a curriculum for developing students functional skills with an emphasis on community-based services was sought. After reviewing the literature, approximately 20 copies of *The Syracuse Community-Referenced Curriculum Guide for Students with Moderate and Severe Disabilities* (Ford et al., 1989) were purchased for designated teachers in the school system. Other articles and books about transition from school to work were routinely shared with teachers and principals. Consultants were brought to Wake County to provide teacher training based on identified needs and interests. All special education teachers in the local school system were invited to attend these sessions, most of which were held at the school's administrative offices.

Information about project activities was routinely shared with the special education teachers, and many became directly involved in the delivery of community based transition services. For example, one student with severe disabilities was mainstreamed into a Vocational Education course, with project staff, the vocational education teacher, the special education teacher, and the resource teacher working collaboratively on planning for and implementing transition services.

Additionally, 45 copies of *From Education to Employment: A Resource Guide*, a user friendly manual developed by Employment Opportunities, Inc. during the project, were distributed to the local school system. Copies were also given to each public school system in North Carolina, many national clearinghouses, parent projects, and transition professionals.

Finally, project information was disseminated through local, regional, state, and national conferences, with some students and family members participating in a number of public presentations.

**Recreation services.** An average of three objectives pertaining to general community integration were developed for each student. Leisure education combined with community resources training was a major component of the service delivery model. A tour and trial approach exposed students to leisure opportunities and activities in their home communities and near their schools. Education and training included activities such as shopping (specialty stores, convenience stores, department stores, malls); ordering and eating in restaurants; participating in sports; using movie theaters; visiting and using public recreation centers and parks; using a bank; travel training including street crossing and using a public bus line. Records tracked the location of the activity; integration level of the activity; student's opinions about the activity; and with whom the activity occurred. As the project progressed, staff focused on assisting the student's family to conduct such leisure activities, rather than becoming dependent on staff to provide direct services.

This phase of the project also addressed social skills in various settings. Student training covered areas such as socialization skills, expected public behavior, time management skills, grooming skills, and money management skills.

**Related activities.** A major function of the project was to connect students with services for adults with disabilities so they could exit school at the same age as their non-disabled peers, if desired and if appropriate. To assure a formal connection with adult services, staff shared student records with adult service agencies and recommended services that students would need upon school exit. All students were referred to the major adult service systems—Vocational Rehabilitation and the county Developmental Disabilities office. Students who chose to stay in school following the project period remain on waiting lists for specific adult services.

Project staff participated regularly on the Wake County Vocational Education Transition Task Force, which is an interagency, interdisciplinary team focused on identifying and developing comprehensive transition services appropriate for the local community. Informational needs identified by this group were also considered when developing the Resource Manual.

Project staff provided consultation about transition services as requested by individual teachers across the state, school systems, and advocacy organizations such as local Arcs. Additionally, information about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities was routinely shared with local community employers, who were encouraged and recruited to act as work experience sites for future students in transition.

## Findings

At the end of the project, all students were 18 years old and legally able to remain enrolled in school. Concurrently, all students had the opportunity to exit school and access adult vocational services without interruption. Earlier in the project, staff negotiated with adult service funding sources and agencies to assure the availability of services if students and families desired to exit the school system. The range of adult vocational choices was wide, given that sheltered workshops and various models of supported employment were made available.

Near the conclusion of the project, one student had moved out of state; 5 students displayed skills for the individual model of supported employment; 6 students were assessed to be immediately able to enter a group model of supported employment; and 3 students needed more intensive employment supervision than was available at the local community work sites. Of the 14 students, project staff recommended that 3 remain in school for further community based training, with 11 students determined to be vocationally prepared to transition into the available adult services.

Only one family chose for their child to graduate and enter employment through adult services. Two students remained in school one additional year, and were concurrently enrolled in adult services for supported employment. All other students remain in school without formal connection to adult services (except waiting list).

Assessment revealed a number of factors behind these decisions. Many of the students did not want to leave school because they did not want to leave their friends. Even though many of them enjoyed working, they preferred to stay with people and routines that were familiar and comfortable to them. In some cases, the special education teachers were not supportive of the student leaving the school system. Many of the families shared concern about the security of the family members after leaving school, and opted for them to remain in the safe, dependable environment of the school. Several family members also expressed that the convenience of the school schedule was preferable over an employment schedule and complications with transportation. Decisions appeared to be made by family members (usually parents) rather than independently by the student.

Detailed functional information about each student is available for ongoing transition services, and to plan for adult services that will occur later. Education and services can be based on the specific vocational and leisure choices that students make as a result of involvement in this transition project.

## Case Study

Charlie is an African American male who lives within the city limits. His tested I.Q. is 40, and he attends a self-

contained Trainable Mentally Handicapped class. He has been in special education classes all of his life. He has a slight speech problem but no other diagnosed disabilities.

Charlie's father has never lived in the home. Charlie currently lives with his mother and a number of extended family members. Many of these members work part-time, and most have work histories of unskilled employment, frequent job changes, and long periods of unemployment between jobs. Charlie receives emotional and financial support from this family unit, but is not encouraged to maintain consistent, long-term employment with any given employer.

Some of Charlie's favorite leisure activities are having friends to his house, going to church, dancing, playing the radio, riding his bicycle, and playing games. Occasionally, he likes to go to the park with his brother or uncle. There are no public recreation facilities or parks near his home, so he must depend on others for transportation to use them. He has a new girlfriend with whom he frequently talks on the telephone. He would like to go to the movies with her. Mrs. Routon, Charlie's mom, has met his girlfriend and supports this relationship. She encourages independence in Charlie, and he has many acquaintances in his neighborhood.

Charlie has had several jobs yet has not maintained paid employment for longer than 3 months at a time. Some of his community work training experiences have been for an entire school semester, averaging 6 hours per week. Formal vocational training through this transition project was for 186 hours. He visited 7 work sites and selected work in 3 different job clusters. Work performance consistently indicated problems with regular attendance even though he was motivated by receiving a paycheck. Project staff found that he initially requires quite a bit of training and supervision to improve his speed and quality of work in a new work setting. He learns within a semester to complete work that is acceptable to the employer, with minimal staff or business supervision. Charlie liked almost all his jobs, and performance on each was similar. His mom, however, indicates that he does not enjoy portions of many of the jobs he has had.

At present, Charlie has a part-time job that he chose with the assistance of a supported employment program. He also attends school on a part-time basis where he has many friends. Through the transition project he learned to understand and use the public bus system for leisure activities. One of his long-range goals is to learn to drive and get a license. He would also like to get married and have children someday. Charlie wants to move away from home when he graduates from school and help support his mother. He hopes to get a different job when he gets out of school, particularly one that pays better. Mrs. Routon generally supports these goals, and encourages Charlie to explore additional vocational options that might be available at school exit.

## Summary

Given the complexity and availability of adult services, both students and families need information that will help them understand and negotiate for appropriate services once students exit school. Connecting students with adult services prior to school exit is a critical transition component. Further, community based transition services are crucial for students with moderate and severe developmental disabilities to learn to become competent and comfortable in their community, having spent much of their lives in settings designed exclusively for people with disabilities. Transition services provided by public schools can easily include leisure and related activities of daily living in community settings, as well as helping students establish vocational goals. Finally, students will face many options in the adult world, and must learn how to make good choices and decisions before facing the challenges and expectations of the adult world.

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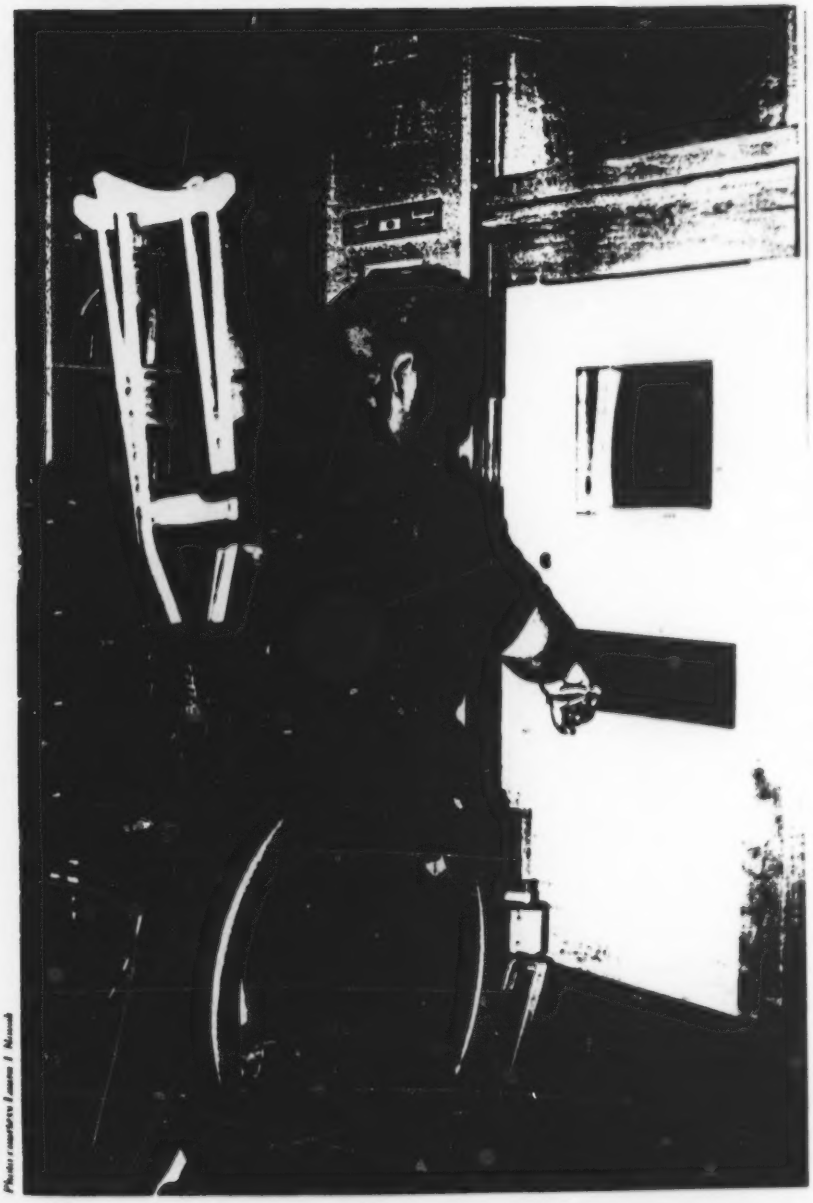
# Building on Today for Tomorrow:

## *Making a Difference with Families!*



**Kathryn Moery, Ed.M.**
Project Coordinator

### Reaching Out To Make a Difference

It was career day at a high school on Chicago's near west side. Roberto was eager to look around at all the different tables staffed with smiling, well-dressed, professionals eager to tell him about jobs and other opportunities after high school. Even though Roberto was just a freshman, he worried about what might happen to him after he left high school. Perhaps he was more apprehensive than most teens his age, and a little more insecure, since he has a disability—a diagnosed learning disability. Although hidden from the scrutinizing eye of the public, his disability has made it harder for him to learn, and to remember what it is he has struggled so hard to learn.

He approached a table where a young man in a wheelchair and a young blind woman were surrounded by his classmates. They asked Roberto if he knew what he wanted to do when he left school. Without pausing, Roberto answered that he wanted to be an auto mechanic. They asked him about the courses he was taking in school. After thinking about their question, he decided that his high school

classes did not have much to do with being a mechanic. The counselor had told him that the Food Preparation course he was taking could lead to a job after high school—but it was not the kind of job that he wanted!

Randall, the man in the wheelchair, asked him if he would like some help in getting the kinds of classes that will prepare him for his employment dream and for other dreams he might have when he gets out of high school. He excitedly filled out an application and was told that someone from the BUILDING Project would contact his parent to set up an interview . . .

On another day, at a high school on Chicago's near north side, a school which reportedly has the worst drop-out rate of any Chicago public high school, Dwayne's mother came to hear about a new, federally-funded project sponsored by the Family Resource Center on Disabilities (formerly the Coordinating Council for Handicapped Children) in Chicago. The letter that she received said that she and her 19-year- old son with autism could receive help in planning for the future after he leaves high school—just two years away. Upon her arrival, she heard Tammy, who is blind, talk about her role in helping young people to realize that, no matter how severe their disability, they could have dreams and goals for employment and community integration after high school.

Joyce, the parent of a 22-year-old son with autism who had "aged-out" of high school, introduced herself as another member of the BUILDING Project staff. Dwayne's mother found out that there are many opportunities and services available to youth with severe disabilities after high school, but sometimes it's hard for families to know where to look and how to link up with services that can meet the unique needs of adult children. Joyce explained that she and her partner, Tammy, help both parents and their children with disabilities to shape a plan for the future, and assist the family in finding the means necessary to help that child reach his or her goals.

Maria, a seventeen-year-old sophomore identified as EMH (Educably Mentally Handicapped), met the BUILDING Project staff at a Career Fair sponsored by her school's Special Education Department. Maria was eager to participate in the project, but indicated that her mother did not speak English. Amelia, a Family Resource Worker who speaks Spanish, and her partner, Randall, were assigned to work with Maria's family. After the first meeting, Amelia later remarked that Maria appeared to be very shy, poorly groomed, and wearing frumpy clothes. She was not progressing academically, having earned only seven credits toward graduation.

Roberto, Dwayne, and Maria are just three of more than 100 youth and their families served by the staff of the BUILDING Project since the project's inception in 1990. All of the families are Chicago residents, the majority being low-income and/or families from culturally diverse backgrounds. Even though the students have a variety of disabilities, ranging from mild to severe, and come from over 30 high schools, all of the youth have caring family members working closely with them and with the staff. Families assist and support these youth in making the difficult transition from high school to adult independent living.

## Making the Difference: Setting Goals

Both Roberto and Dwayne's families regularly met with their team of Family Resource Workers from the BUILDING Project for two years. Every four to six weeks the team met with them in their own homes, or in another location within their community, selected for mutual comfort and accessibility. During the initial meeting, Roberto and Dwayne described their vision for their future. As their family members listened, commenting periodically, the Family Resource Workers recorded this information. In subsequent meetings, the Family Resource Workers used this vision, based on the expressed needs, interests, and preferences of Roberto and Dwayne, as a springboard to assist the family in developing a set of Individualized Transition Plans. These transition plans contain the steps necessary for the vision to turn into a reality.

As a Family Networking Transition Project, the model developed in the BUILDING Project has the following goals:

- to assist families to develop Individualized Transition Plans to be implemented by the school and other adult service providers in compliance with the transition mandate in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- to identify informal, as well as formal, approaches to accessing services during and after the transition from high school to the adult community;
- to assist families in developing formal, as well as informal, networks of support during and after the transition from high school to the adult community;
- to assist the youth and family members to develop skills for advocacy and self-advocacy; and
- to empower youth and families to access needed supports and services during and after the transition from high school to the adult community.

## Making the Difference: BUILDING Tomorrows

Several months after the initial meeting, Roberto's mother confided to her Family Resource Workers how good it felt to listen to her son share with great excitement his dreams for the future: dreams about a job, a home, recreation and leisure activities, and about how he will be able to travel independently in his community without getting lost. When invited to share his perceptions of the BUILDING Project

at a workshop which he co-presented with project staff at a large state conference, Roberto spoke of how he had brought the publicity flyers about the project to the counselor in his grade school so that younger children could know about the kind of help he had received through the BUILDING Project. Both families are now working closely with the school professionals and other adult service providers to ensure that the objectives in their children's Transition Plans can be met.

To meet the project goals, the BUILDING Project staff provides the following ongoing services to each family from the time of the family's recruitment into the project:

- Individualized assistance in formulating transition plans in each of the following areas to meet the expressed needs and preferences of the transitioning youth: employment, postsecondary training/education, housing, recreation/leisure, income support, transportation, medical services, insurance, advocacy/self-advocacy;
- Training and educational activities for project youth and their families, including: Special Education Rights, job seeking skills, and uses of assistive technology;
- Individualized assistance to prepare families for full participation in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting where transition services are considered, in compliance with the IDEA mandate (34 CFR 300.18, 300.344(c), 300.346(b), 300.347);
- Support groups for project youth and adult family members;
- Ongoing information, referral, and linkage; and
- Follow-along and case coordination.

## Making the Difference: Reaching Tomorrow

For eighteen months, Amelia and Randall met monthly with Maria and many members of her extended family in her home to identify realistic goals for the future, and to develop transition plans to help her meet these goals. Soon after the initial meeting, Maria determined that she was interested in clerical work after high school. Heretofore, Maria had no school courses to prepare her for office work. To support this goal, BUILDING Project staff suggested including appropriate vocational classes in Maria's IEP.

Amelia and Randall helped Maria's mother dictate a letter in Spanish requesting a meeting to add appropriate vocational classes to the IEP. With Amelia's help, Maria translated and wrote the letter in English. The next day she delivered it to her case manager at school. Both Maria and her mother feared the case manager because of her disrespectful manner when interacting with families. They expressed apprehension about having to work through her to accomplish these pivotal steps in Maria's future planning.

By providing information about IDEA and through role playing, Amelia and Randall prepared Maria and her family to actively participate in the IEP meeting in which Maria's transition needs were to be discussed.

Similarly, Maria and her mother wrote a letter to the transition liaison

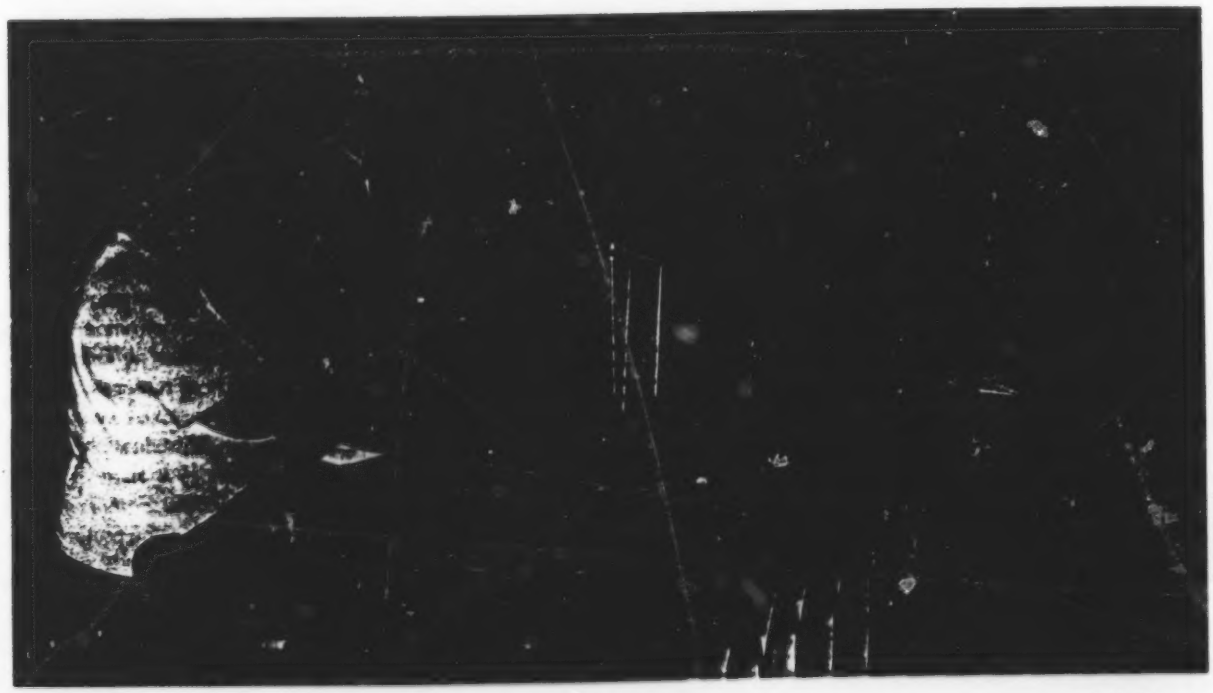


Photo courtesy Leona J. Nowak

from the local vocational rehabilitation office, and he attended the meeting to open Maria's case with his agency. Maria's and her mother's apprehension melted when the case manager respectfully considered their input at the meeting, and developed a class schedule that would include appropriate vocational classes during Maria's junior year.

In her senior year, Maria expressed the desire to be placed in a job in the community that would help her to develop better clerical skills. She independently enlisted the help of the school's job developer to explore community-based job opportunities.

## Making the Difference: Unique Features of the BUILDING Project

The staff of trained professionals is comprised of adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities who live in Chicago communities. One staff person is Spanish-speaking. Because of their common bonds with the families they serve, and their first-hand experiences as parents and consumers, they serve as mentors and role models for each family. In addition to individualized transition planning services and support groups, the project staff provides training for self-advocacy and family empowerment to foster success in accessing appropriate services over a lifetime.

The youth, family members, and staff work as a team to carefully plan for employment, housing, and all facets of integrated community living for the youth after high school. Mothers, fathers, grandmothers, brothers, and aunts are now helping their young family member with a disability to BUILD for the future.

Staff provides individualized transition planning assistance in the family's home or community. These meetings are scheduled at a time and in a location that is convenient for both the youth and participating adult family members.

BUILDING Project youth and their families have acted as mentors to other families, and have provided technical assistance to professional and parent audiences through dissemination activities. A number of different participating families have co-presented transition planning workshops with project staff at local, state, and national conferences.

## Making the Difference: Tomorrow is Today

Today Maria is a stylishly dressed, well-groomed 19-year-old who works in a paid position as a typist at a local hospital after school three days per week and maintains good grades in school. She looks forward to graduating in June. In the past, Maria had to rely on her father to drive her to destinations outside her community. Maria now travels independently to and from her job on public transportation, and requires no additional supports on the job.

## Discovering the Difference: BUILDING Project Effectiveness

Over 90 percent of respondents to the Parent/Student Survey rated the project services as good and were satisfied with the way the services were delivered. The majority of parent respondents reported that, as a result of project services, they have talked to or written letters to school counselors, special education coordinators, school principals, the Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the Social Security Administration. A majority of the student respondents indicated that they have contacted the school counselor as a result of services received in the project. In addition, approximately one-third of the student respondents reported contacting the special education coordinator, the Department of Rehabilitation Services, the school principal, and the Social Security Administration.

The majority of parent respondents indicated that the staff helped them receive the following transition services: transition goals added to the IEP, SSI (Supplemental Security Income) for their child, Department of Rehabilitation Services eligibility, and career planning. Approximately one-third of the student respondents reported receiving SSI and having transition goals added to the IEP.

In December of 1992, the BUILDING Project was awarded the status of an exemplary project for parent-professional collaboration through the North Central Regional Information Exchange (Center on Community Integration, University of Minnesota).

## How the Building Project Makes a Difference With Families

The BUILDING Project provides a grass roots approach to transition planning, as embodied in the IDEA mandate which states that transition planning must be based on the needs, interests, and preferences of the student with a disability, and that the youth, parents, school, and appropriate adult service providers must be involved in the process. Fostering family communication while building skills for family empowerment and helping families to overcome barriers to accessing help is the cornerstone of the BUILDING Project. Providing ongoing information, referral, and linkage, and giving individualized planning assistance in home communities where families feel safe and comfortable are the essential elements of a community based, family centered transition planning model.

A manual on how to replicate this model, which can be used by parents, professionals, or individuals with disabilities, entitled *After High School . . . ? BUILDING on Today for Tomorrow*, has been developed by the project. For additional information contact Kathryn Moery at the Family Resource Center on Disabilities, 20 East Jackson, Room 900, Chicago, Illinois 60604.

# Computer Technologies Program: *A Partnership In Progress*

Photo courtesy Joan Breves

**Joan Breves**
Executive Director

## History

In 1972 after an IBM executive became severely disabled and was successfully retrained as a business applications programmer, IBM began to promote computer programming as an ideal professional opportunity for people with disabilities. With the cooperation of the State Department of Rehabilitation and the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, California, IBM established the Center for Independent Living (CIL) Computer Training Program (CTP) in 1975. This marked the formation of the first Business Advisory Council (BAC), a group of Bay Area programming professionals who work closely with CTP, monitoring all aspects of the program to ensure its success.

Six years later in 1981, after 55 students with disabilities were successfully trained and placed with Bay Area corporations, the program became separately incorporated. Later, in 1989 the name was changed to the Computer Technologies Program (CTP).

## About CTP

The Computer Technologies Program is a nonprofit, nine month intensive training organization with the goal of enabling people with disabilities to gain competitive employment in the information technologies field. CTP graduates are now being placed in jobs with an average salary of $30,000 per year. Since its inception, CTP has graduated 309 persons with disabilities and attributes its high level of placement success to the active involvement of the BAC.

## Business Advisory Council

Composed of nearly 200 executives and data processing personnel from as many as 65 Bay Area corporations and businesses, the Business Advisory Council provides the technical support and curricula to ensure a simulated business environment with the latest computer programming information. This high quality training, coupled with state of the art, specially equipped computer hardware provided by IBM, gives students the practical hands on experience to enter the work force as competitive and well qualified programmers.

## A Corporate Look at CTP

Members of the Business Advisory Council serve in a variety of capacities such as instructors, curriculum consultants, and guest lecturers. BAC members evaluate student's technical progress and help them develop job seeking skills. BAC members explain why hiring a CTP graduate makes good business sense,"I have and plan to continue to hire graduates from the Computer Technologies Program. The technical and professional preparedness of these folks typically exceeds many an experienced programmer. Not only have those graduates I've worked with contributed significantly to our "bottom line" but the example they set inspires their peers towards greater accomplishments. Everybody benefits . . . the individual and the company." *Sandy Sverdloff, Assistant Vice President, Wells Fargo Bank*

"We usually require one year of experience for our entry level positions, but we will accept completion of the CTP coursework as equivalent experience. We have found the students to be highly motivated and well trained, and they have no trouble adapting to our work environment. We will continue to participate in the intern program and recruit these students who demonstrate their skills. In fact, the CTP graduates continue their personal development and have assumed responsible positions in our organization."*Denise Miller, Manager, Financial Administration Systems, Kaiser Permanente*

## A Partnership in Progress

Another vital component that ensures CTP's success is its partnership with the State of California. Primarily funded by the State Department of Rehabilitation, CTP is a valuable resource for training people with disabilities. Students, who before entering CTP were receiving SSI, SDI, Medicare, and Medicaid, graduate to become financially independent.

Carol Hyland, Senior Rehabilitation Counselor of Pleasant Hill endorses CTP: "The Computer Technologies Program offers an exceptionally supportive environment in which, regardless of the severity of their disability, students are able to develop competitive, state of the art programming skills that result in substantial entry level salaries and promotional opportunities. I would encourage everyone to consider this excellent program as a primary resource."

## Clients Served

The Computer Technologies Program has successfully trained and placed persons with a broad range of disabilities: blindness and visual impairment, deafness and hearing impairment, progressive disabilities, congenital disabilities, spinal cord injuries, and mental disabilities. Our experience has been that an individual with an aptitude and interest in programming can be very successful in data processing regardless of the type of disability.

For many people with severe disabilities, the professional work world appears out of reach. Many jobs require physical skills beyond their capabilities. Without an opportunity to exercise their mental abilities in a professional business environment, many persons with disabilities are forced to settle for jobs paying minimum wages supplemented with state disability and social security. The Computer Technologies Program offers viable career options.

Nelson Fincher saw few opportunities for employment before learning about the Computer Technologies Program in 1978. "I was so ill at the time that I figured I would be on government assistance for the rest of my life." Born with sickle cell anemia, Nelson completed the program, passed rigorous reviews and was hired on graduation day 1980 by IBM as a technical trainee. He has moved nine levels within the corporate structure to become an advisory programmer working on testing for large systems software. Nelson, who explains that, "CTP gave me a chance to do something positive with my life. I am extremely grateful" is a vital member of the Business Advisory Committee.

## A Profile of the CTP Graduate

Three elements characterize the CTP graduate:

- excellent technical skills
- a strong business orientation
- a high degree of motivation

It is the program's hands on, "real world," business approach which sets the CTP graduate apart in competing for entry level programming positions. CTP graduates have demonstrated their success in a variety of computing environments throughout the Bay Area.

## Meet the CTP Graduates

### Glen Vinton, Chevron

Glen was in his 20th year with Pan Am when he became a quadriplegic as a result of a diving accident. After exploring career opportunities, Glen came to CTP in 1979. After months of hard work and extensive training, he graduated and was hired by Chevron as an applications programmer. After three promotions, Glen is now teaching Chevron employees software applications. "A disabled person needs to earn enough money to pay for the additional cost incurred because of their disability," Glen said, referring to special transportation and attendant costs. "CTP trains disabled persons to qualify for a high entry level salary."

### Cheryl Fleck, Visa

Tony Lewis, a project manager at Visa International, who is proficient in Sign Language, wanted to hire someone with a background in "C" language. He was asked by a Visa employee who is a CTP board member to consider interviewing CTP graduates. CTP recommended Cheryl Fleck, a deaf graduate, who had recently taken "C" extension classes. Cheryl was able to phone Tony directly using a TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf), since Tony has a TDD in his office. It was the first time Cheryl met with an employer who was able to communicate in an interview without an interpreter.

After a series of interviews, Cheryl was offered a programming position with Visa. In an article about CTP in his company newsletter, Tony commented that he was "very impressed with Cheryl's presence and her initiative in improving her computer skills beyond what CTP offers." Cheryl is very pleased with the results of all the hard work she has put into this field, and feels that her education and training have enriched her life.

## A Unique Component

A unique component of the Computer Technologies Program's BAC is the Task Force on the Employment of Deaf People. The task force was initiated in 1991 to address the particular barriers to employment deaf graduates of the program have faced in seeking programming positions. The task force includes business people, service providers, and members of the Deaf Community who have met to evaluate these barriers and develop strategies to overcome them.

The task force has undertaken several projects to accomplish its goal. Most recently, members of the task force organized an Awards Ceremony to acknowledge companies who have created employment opportunities for deaf people, and to promote these successful employment models to the business community. The program included a presentation on "The ADA and the Deaf," geared towards an audience of managers, programmers, and human resource personnel from various Bay Area corporations.

The task force has also produced a brochure about programmers who are deaf, highlighting the achievements of deaf graduates of CTP who are working successfully in a variety of corporate environments. Included in the brochure is information about companies who have successfully hired deaf graduates, communication techniques used by deaf programmers on the job, and adaptive equipment such as TDDs and pagers which vibrate rather than beep, as well as testimonials from deaf programmers and their managers.

One of the reasons that employed deaf graduates of the program have been so successful is the "real world" nature of the training. Joseph Quinn, an instructor at CTP, comments that "during their training, CTP students work in an environment that simulates the work place. From this, deaf students gain not only technical proficiency, but also experience communicating and interacting with hearing supervisors and students. When our deaf graduates are asked "How would you communicate on the job?" their answer is not theoretical they've been doing it!".

This is backed up by the observations of Richard Koltun, a Human Resources System Manager at Kaiser Permanente. He stated, "We have hired several CTP graduates who are deaf. All have been very motivated and hard working. Between E mail, typing on the computer screen, writing, and everyone taking a great interest in learning to sign, communication is no problem. All of these graduates are now highly valued employees."

## Instructors

Many of our instructors are professionals currently working in the field of data processing. They bring practical experience and business acumen into the classroom. Many of the principal, on-site instructors also have disabilities and serve as excellent role models for the students.

### Sandy Clauson

Three days a week Sandy Clauson spends three hours a day in the dialysis unit at a Berkeley hospital. Accompanied by her guide dog, Valerie, she then awaits a city bus that transports them to the Computer Technologies Program where Sandy teaches 11 disabled students JCL (Job Control Language). Sandy, who is blind as a result of diabetes has had a kidney transplant, quadruple bypass surgery, and maintains an unbelievable level of enthusiasm even after hours of dialysis.

"One of my greatest pleasures is realizing that the students understand the concepts I am teaching. This is the feeling that really energizes me. As a graduate of CTP, and now as a teacher, I can give back to other students the programming skills and knowledge I received. I find little satisfaction giving students answers to their programming problems. My satisfaction comes in seeing them solve their own problems. Being blind, my teaching style requires

the students to read their code to me. Very often this process causes them to discover their own errors because I require that they read their code very precisely. It gives them a boost to solve their own problems."

## CTP Curriculum

To meet the changing needs of today's Information Technologies market, our curriculum promotes a strong business orientation in all phases of students' training. Programming assignments simulate realistic business problems. By incorporating considerable computer lab time, students run and test their own programs on both personal computers and mainframes. The curriculum is regularly evaluated and enhanced by members of the Business Advisory Council.

## Technical Review Boards

Technical Review Boards are one of the major components of the Computer Technologies Program's nine month program. The Technical Review Boards provide valuable feedback about the Computer Technologies Program's curriculum design and each candidates' potential for success in the field of programming.

There are three technical reviews during the training. Data processing professionals from the BAC are asked to commit a day for the Technical Review Board. After examining a portfolio of each students' programs, reviewers interview the student. Students and reviewers alike find the technical review a rewarding experience. Adrienne Rush, Online Support Manager, Hewlett-Packard, comments, "The CTP grads I've reviewed compare very favorably with the best entry-level candidates I've interviewed."

## Internship

At the conclusion of their formal class instruction, graduates complete an internship with a Bay Area company where they perform programming tasks on the job. Interns are expected to adapt to new programming environments, analyze assignments, and implement solutions within projected timelines. The internship provides managers a "no risk" opportunity to evaluate the performance and compatibility of prospective employees. Many employers have offered their interns permanent employment with the sponsoring company.

## IBM's Continued Role

As the personal computer (PC) made significant inroads into the business world, there followed an increased demand for people trained to work on PCs in such skills as word processing, computer assisted drafting, computer assisted design, customer service representation, data entry, personal computer operator, and personal computer expert.

The IBM Program to Train Disabled Persons expanded by adding a second training curriculum focused on PC training and provided the personal computers for this training. This broadened the training opportunities for students more interested in non-programming areas of data processing. Both the programming and PC training are provided by an IBM liaison representative who works closely with the project on a local level.

## Association of Rehabilitation Programs in Data Processing (ARPDP)

Founded in 1978 as a conduit to share information on the training and placement of persons with disabilities in technology related careers, the Association of Rehabilitation Programs in Data Processing (ARPDP) is now an international network of nearly 60 training centers. Member programs share information on the appropriate accommodations and adaptive devices, training and placement techniques, newly developed curricula and other materials, as well as job placement assistance. The association assists in the development of new programs by providing technical assistance and support.

Both ARPDP and its member projects involve volunteer business executives in all phases of its operations. The member projects respond to local employment needs by establishing a partnership among the business sector, educational and training facilities, state rehabilitation services, and persons with disabilities. This partnership allows business to prescribe training, provide state of the art training facilities, permit state rehabilitation to serve clients for whom few resources are available, and offers persons with disabilities career opportunities in technology-related occupations. Most of the individual member programs were initiated with direct assistance from IBM. Member organizations include public and private agencies, trade schools, and private and public two-year and four-year colleges.

## PWI BAC Exemplary Model

Corporations involved with PWI Business Advisory Councils across the country are working with ARPDP programs to successfully train and employ disabled people.

People with disabilities graduating from these projects enter a field paying high salaries and offering professional growth opportunities. The business community benefits from the opportunity to hire qualified trained programmers and PC specialists who contribute to their data processing organizations. Graduates who have been promoted to managers and now employers are well positioned to maximize the mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as they extend employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

PWI projects provide a successful model of business, communities, and government working collaborately in a relationship that builds a healthy economy and benefits all people.

When she was sworn in as assistant secretary, Ms. Heumann said:

"Twenty years ago, when I first became involved in disability advocacy, whoever would have believed that people with disabilities would have made the gains we have made. We have seen the development of independent living centers. We have seen public schools begin to recognize that children with disabilities can go to school along side nondisabled children and produce a valuable educational setting for all. But despite the gains that have been made, there is much work left to be done. Many policies and programs affecting the lives of millions of children and adults with disabilities and their families are now part of my responsibility.

People ask me what am I going to do. Why did I take this job? I am taking this job because I believe in President Clinton's commitment to change for all Americans. Further, I believe in Secretary Riley's commitment to serve the needs of people with disabilities and his commitment to provide quality education for all students. Together we can make a difference. I am excited about working within the government with the many people who have great experience and a vision for a better future for all Americans.

I intend to ensure that the issues affecting people with disabilities are seen as an integral part of the work of the Department of Education. I will work to provide for full and appropriate implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). I will work to ensure that children with disabilities will benefit from the Administration's Goals 2000: Educate America Act, and from the recently announced school to work initiative jointly sponsored by the Departments of Education and Labor. I will also work to ensure full implementation of the recent amendments to the Rehabilitation Act so that people with disabilities will have greater opportunities to achieve an independent life style. And I will work to fully implement the Americans with Disabilities Act in my role as assistant secretary.

I will have accomplished my goals if we stop seeing the needs of people with disabilities as being special and different. I want to work with all of you to ensure that we are part of the total fabric of our country. We have many laws on the books. Now we must enforce the letter and spirit of these laws." ♦

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